Daily Report

Latin America

FBIS-LAT-88-042
Thursday
3 March 1988

Daily Report
Latin America

FBIS-LAT-88-042 *3 March 1988*

CONTENTS

INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

OAS Urges UK To Cancel Falklands Maneuvers *[Buenos Aires TELAM]* 1
Group of Eight Concerned Over UK Maneuvers *[EFE]* 1
Group of Eight, EC Hold Meeting in Hamburg 1
EC Welcomes Plan *[DPA]* 1
Panamanian on 'Crisis' *[DPA]* 1
UK Maneuver Talks Denied *[Buenos Aires TELAM]* 2
Uruguay's Iglesias Comments *[Montevideo]* 2

CARIBBEAN

Cuba

Castro Interview With NBC Reporter Shriver 3
Vice President on Human Rights, Panama, Angola *[Paris L'HUMANITE 29 Feb]* 29
Third Plenary Meeting of UJC Opens 30
Aldana Gives Closing Speech 30
Communist, Labor Party Delegations To Meet 30
GDR's Hermann Axen Arrives 30
Lao Delegation Welcomed 30
Risquet, Bilak at CSSR Anniversary Ceremony 30
1988 Trade Agreement With Ethiopia Signed 31
Cabrisas Ends Official Visit to Greece 31
BASTION Names Soviet Military Attaches *[Belgrade TANJUG]* 31

Bahamas

Diplomatic Ties Established With Bangladesh 31

Dominican Republic

Political Groups, Unions Call for Strike 31

Haiti

Konakom Calls on Groups To Remobilize 31

MEXICO

Government Announces Interest Rate Reductions 33

CENTRAL AMERICA

Guatemala

Cerezo Condemns Delvalle Ouster, Recalls Envoy *[AFP]* 34
Congress Criticizes Panama's 'Violations' *[EL GRAFICO 2 Mar]* 34

Nicaragua

Ortega Proposes Direct Talks With Contras 34
Ortega Comments 35
Obando on Ortega Meeting 37

Panama

Solis Palma, Cabinet Meet; Abadia Comments 38
Solis Holds News Conference 39
Government Replaces Ambassador to U.S. 45
Two Majors Discharged From FDP, Arrested *[San Jose]* 45
Chiari Denies Dismissals *[DPA]* 45
Reports Called 'Completely False' *[LA ESTRELLA DE PAMAMA 3 Mar]* 45
Government To Take Legal Action Against Delvalle *[EFE]* 46
Injunction Dismissed Against Assembly Leader 46
Solis Dismisses More Delvalle Appointees 46
Noriega Discusses U.S. Economic Pressure *[Buenos Aires REUTER]* 46
Crusade Member Says Noriega Destroying Economy *[San Jose]* 47
Delvalle Warns Against Dealing With 'Regime' *[San Jose]* 47
National Bank Communique Reports Funds Suspended 48
CBN Tells Banks To Open, Reaffirms Use of Dollar *[LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA 2 Mar]* 48
Some Businesses Reopen 49
Air Panama Diverts Miami-Bound Flight to Cuba *[AFP]* 49
PPP's Changmarin Blames U.S. for Incidents *[CRITICA 2 Mar]* 49
Reagan Drug Fighting Statement Criticized *[AFP]* 50
Zuniga Describes Radio Seizure, Kidnapping *[San Jose]* 50
General Ruben Paredes Claims FDP 'Purge' *[Buenos Aires REUTER]* 51
Daily Analyzes FDP Problems *[LA PRENSA 6 Feb]* 51
Groups Express Support for Noriega, Solis Palma 52
General Paredes Views Ramifications of Situation *[Bogota]* 53

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina

Measures To Prevent Falklands 'Incidents' *[EFE]* 55
'Military Alert' Planned 55
Caputo To Call Security Council Meeting 55
More on Caputo UN Appeal 56

Bolivia

Minister Says 1st Day of COB Strike Failure 56
Activities 90% Normal 57

Chile

State of Emergency Extended for 90 Days 57
Dignidad Colony Blames Leftists for FRG Stance 57
Briefs 57
Foreign Debt Figures 57

Colombia

Minister on 'Disagreeable Situation' in Panama 57

Ecuador

Government Modifies Currency Exchange System *[AFP]* 58

Paraguay

U.S. Envoy 'Idiot,' 'Filthy,' 'Tasteless' 58

Uruguay

Public Debt Refinancing Agreement Reached *[EFE]* 59
Sanguinetti on Economy, Debt, Policies 59

Suriname

Cost of Living More Than Doubles Since 1984 60

OAS Urges UK To Cancel Falklands Maneuvers

PY012020 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 1910 GMT 1 Mar 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 1 Mar (TELAM)—The OAS Permanent Council has urged the United Kingdom to cancel its decision to carry out military maneuvers in the Malvinas Islands area, believing that the maneuvers would aggravate tension in the region and hinder the negotiations to settle the conflict over the sovereignty of the southern archipelagos.

According to information supplied by the Argentine Foreign Ministry, the OAS exhortation was approved by a 25-0 vote, with abstentions by the United States and the Caribbean state of St Lucia.

Group of Eight Concerned Over UK Maneuvers

PY021852 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1739 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] United Nations, 2 Mar (EFE)—The foreign ministers of the Group of Eight—who now only number seven due to Panama's exclusion from the group—today expressed to the United Nations their "deepest concern over the United Kingdom's decision to conduct military maneuvers in the Malvinas Islands."

In a note sent to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Argentine, Brazilian, Colombian, Mexican, Peruvian, Uruguayan, and Venezuelan foreign ministers "denounce the seriousness of the decision" made by the United Kingdom, "which will increase tension in the South Atlantic."

The ministers also urge the British Government "not to hold the scheduled military maneuvers and to renew bilateral negotiations with Argentina to peacefully and definitively resolve the dispute of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands."

The foreign ministers of the seven countries agreed to draft this joint declaration on 25 February in Cartagena. Panama was excluded from the group in view of the political crisis being experienced in the country and of the double international representation created by the crisis.

Enrique Penalosa, Colombian permanent representative at the United Nations, was appointed to officially present the note to Perez de Cuellar, although in only a few days Argentina will probably convoke a UN Security Council meeting to discuss the situation.

Group of Eight, EC Hold Meeting in Hamburg

EC Welcomes Plan

LD011300 Hamburg DPA in German 1145 GMT 1 Mar 88

[Excerpts] Hamburg (DPA)—The European Community is prepared for increased political, financial, and economic involvement in Central America. In a joint political statement issued in Hamburg today at the end of a 2-day conference with nine colleagues from Central America and the Contadora Group—Mexico, Colombia, Panama, and Venezuela—the EC foreign ministers welcomed a "Plan for Emergency Measures." It was presented by Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, as EC Council chairman, praised the "new, confident climate" of this fourth "San Jose Conference", named after its first venue.

The plan is aimed at reviving and developing industry in this region with the support of the international community. The EC and its members are prepared, the statement says, to make a "special contribution" in support of this emergency program in order to support the peace process in this crisis region. The Europeans said the program is the "right way" and declared their readiness to coordinate their aid with the United Nations and other donor countries. [passage omitted]

Genscher emphasized that political stability and respect for human rights are essential preconditions for the economic amelioration of the region: "Internal and external peace are inseparably linked." In their joint political statement the ministers underlined that stopping aid for "irregular armed forces or rebellious movements by the governments within and outside that region is...an essential precondition for the creation of a sound and lasting peace".

The foreign ministers of the Central American states said that the fourth "San Jose" conference was a success. Rodrigo Madrigal Nieto, the representative of Costa Rica, said that the meeting was a "step forward". Miguel D'Escoto Brockman, his colleague from Nicaragua, spoke of "much remarkable progress". However, much remains to be done. He said that the cooperation between Central America and the EC is especially important for the small countries in order to achieve their independence.

The next "San Jose Conference" is to be held in San Pedro Sula (Honduras) in early 1989.

Panamanian on 'Crisis'

LD011402 Hamburg DPA in German 1304 GMT 1 Mar 88

[Excerpt] Hamburg (DPA)—Without mentioning the United States directly, Jose Maria Cabrera, deputy foreign minister of Panama, has said that "interference from outside" in his country's political life was the "most important factor" in unleashing the domestic crisis. At the end of the "San Jose IV" conference of foreign ministers of the EC and Latin America, Cabrera told newsmen in Hamburg on Tuesday that the "democratic process" in Panama will "emerge strengthened from the present crisis." For that reason, even foreign interventions would have no chance.

The European Community intends to appeal to the rulers in Panama to seek solutions on the path of peace and democracy. To this end, it was learned from conference circles, a political statement probably will be published on Wednesday which says that the region's problems can be solved only through democracy, respect for human rights, and independence. [passage omitted]

UK Maneuver Talks Denied

PY011825 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 1718 GMT 1 Mar 88

[Text] Hamburg, 1 Mar (TELAM-DPA)—The conference of the foreign ministers of the Group of Eight and the EEC began in Hamburg this afternoon, a few hours after the conclusions of the "San Jose IV" meeting between the EC, the Contadora Group, and Central American representatives.

Before entering the session room, Argentine Foreign Minister Dante Caputo said the conference would not address the upcoming British military maneuvers in the Malvinas Islands.

Last week, the Group of Eight in Cartagena (Colombia) condemned the military exercises to be carried out by the United Kingdom in the South Atlantic archipelago, which Argentina claims as its own.

The conference agenda includes East-West relations, disarmament, and world trade.

Uruguay's Iglesias Comments

PY021350 Montevideo Radio Carve in Spanish 0930 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Interview with Uruguayan Foreign Minister Enrique Iglesias by reporter Tomas Friedmann in Hamburg on 1 March—recorded]

[Excerpt] [Friedmann] We are here in Hamburg. As we have already reported, Foreign Minister Iglesias has attended a meeting between the foreign ministers of the Rio de Janeiro group and the EEC representatives and foreign ministers. Mr Foreign Minister, what is the significance of this new meeting between Europe and Latin America?

[Iglesias] I believe it has considerable significance, since we have managed to establish a dialogue between the (?12) foreign ministers of the EEC countries and the Rio de Janeiro group. This contact, which began some months ago in New York, has become a very interesting and useful dialogue. I would say this is very strong support that the EEC and its ministers are extending to our countries and to Latin America, as far as political and economic problems are concerned. This is a fruitful, unprecedented dialogue that all of us should welcome.

[Friedmann] Issues like the foreign debt and trade must have been high on the agenda, right?

[Iglesias] There were two major issues. We extensively addressed the economic issue. We proposed some solutions to the general trade problems. We addressed the prospects of the Uruguay round of GATT talks and mentioned the upcoming presidential (?visit) to the GATT, which reflects our determination to continue to support and encourage the results of this round. We talked a lot about the foreign debt issue, about the EEC economic policy—within a process of change—and about the positive or negative influence of this policy on our development. In this regard, Uruguay pointed out that their decisions do not affect their own countries alone but, in one way or another, also affect our growth and development. This was clearly established through long hours of frank exchanges of opinion, and especially at this informal dinner, where the foreign ministers talked about economic issues and about the world and regional political situation.

[Friedmann] Does Europe show more understanding of the foreign debt problem? Are there any chances for a [words indistinct] solution?

[Iglesias] Solutions are being devised, because we see new mechanisms and more flexible formulas every day. I believe we are moving forward with a large number of options that are helping us work out more equitable solutions. Europe has always understood this problem, and I believe we have found understanding for what we have been doing, and especially for the enormous sacrifice Latin America has made to meet its obligations.

[Friedmann] President Sanguinetti will visit the GATT and will also raise these issues before the EEC, right?

[Iglesias] Of course. I believe the president will talk about the Uruguay round at the GATT, and then at the EEC he will have the opportunity to reiterate his position against protectionism, seeking to help us overcome our current economic problems. [passage omitted]

Cuba

Castro Interview With NBC Reporter Shriver

FL291408 Havana Television Service in Spanish 0134 GMT 28 Feb 88

[Interview with President Fidel Castro by NBC reporter Maria Shriver on the night of 24-25 February in Havana; questions in English with Spanish translation; answers in Spanish with English translation—recorded]

[Text] [Shriver] As you know, your name has been in the news in the United States of late and in not a very popular way. Talking about [Panamanian citizen] Jose Blandon—he testified before the Foreign Relations Committee about several things concerning you, and I would like to examine them one by one so you may respond. First, he testified that you mediated in a dispute between the drug cartel in Colombia and General Noriega [Panama Defense Forces commander], and that you were able to get Gen Noriega to return $5 million to the drug cartel in Colombia in regard to a group of people who had been seized in a plant in Panama. Did you mediate in that dispute?

[Castro] I am going to tell you one thing. The advice might not have been bad if in truth something like that had happened. If something like that had happened and someone had had sufficient confidence in me as to ask me for advice, perhaps it might not have been bad advice. But the problem is that there is not the slightest truth in that. I read all those reports. It's not only that. The accusations were not directed against Cuba; the accusations were basically leveled at Noriega. He only tried to link us indirectly. First of all, I believe there is something sordid and dirty about this business. In my opinion, all this campaign against Noriega is founded on a great conspiracy, not against Noriega, but against the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. That is my opinion. It's a huge conspiracy to remove the National Guard [as heard] from Panamanian politics, simply because the Panamanian National Guard observes a patriotic and nationalist stance. In my view, that is what's at the bottom of this.

I have here about 40 pages of all the reports published about Blandon's statements. Blandon has talked about everything under the sun. He has talked about both human and divine things. I think he has made a very big mistake. He testified under oath before the Senate. I understand he was under obligation to tell the truth. I understand that anyone who makes a false statement under oath is committing a serious crime. I really have the evidence that Blandon has lied. I will tell you why.

[Shriver] But let me just respond. [sentence as heard] Did you not mediate in a dispute between the Colombian drug cartel and Noriega?

[Castro] That's absurd! Totally absurd! That would have meant that a foreigner had enormous confidence in us, knowing the way we are and knowing the rectitude of the revolution. To have had that sort of confidence is absurd. That is something absurd. If anyone had a relationship of that nature, to come to talk to me, of all people, here in Cuba—it's absurd. I can prove that all that is a lie. I can prove it. Why? Because Blandon does not recall when he was in Cuba; he doesn't remember the exact dates. He might not remember what he said. But I have all the exact information in my files. When I receive delegations, I keep a diary of all the people I meet. As a rule, there's a stenographic version of my conversations with the delegations. Blandon doesn't remember when he was here.

The first time was on 26 February 1980. Torrijos was still alive. He came with (Marcel Salamen) and Lieutenant (Camargo). That's three. That was the first time. This has no relevance in this business, but I have here for 26 February 1980 almost 200 pages of the stenographic transcript of what he said, what all three said, including Blandon. The second time he came to Cuba—he never came alone, he always came with a delegation, a civilian or mixed military-civilian delegation. On 5 May 1980, he returned, this time with Colonel Noriega, (Camargo), (Souza), and (Del Cid), a military man. All these were military men. Among them was Blandon. One, two, three, four, five people. I have here...

[Shriver, interrupting] And they came to discuss what?

[Castro] Various political topics. They always came to talk about political issues. At that time they came to talk about the canal negotiations, how they were coming along. Before that, when Blandon was not included, they came to talk about problems in Central America, certain concerns. It's here. We would have to look it up, but it's here in my files. Here it is, the stenographic version of the 5 May meeting.

It's complete. There's more than 70 pages. This is from the time of Torrijos. Noriega was not yet a leader nor was he in charge. This was 5 May. The third time that Blandon came to Cuba was 7 February 1984. He came with (Ozores), Romulo Escobar, (Niels Castro), Major Maldonado, Major Delgado, and Blandon. That was 7 February 1984. That was the third time that Blandon came to Cuba. And I have here a stenographic transcript of over 80 pages of the whole conversation with full details. Witnesses were present at all these conversations.

[Shriver] Do you tape these conversations?

[Castro] I will only say that I have the stenographic transcript. I am not saying anything else—only that my evidence is irrefutable. The fourth time Blandon came to Cuba, he came with a delegation headed by Gen Noriega on 5 July 1984. That time Blandon did not participate in the conversations at all.

[Shriver] But he came.

[Castro] Yes, he did come that time but we did not talk. He stayed at a protocol house. I visited him there, but all the meetings were here in this office.

[Shriver] Between you and Gen Noriega.

[Castro] Yes. I spoke with Noriega more than once. I am talking about Blandon now, because he refers to things he says he discussed with me. Here is 7 February and 5 July. He did not talk with me that time. Noriega came with some aides and Noriega talked to me about various political issues. That was 5 July 1984. All right. Blandon came here for the last time in 1985, on 6 January. He came with Lieutenant Colonel (Boujon), Major (Samudio), Major (Baldonado). One, two, three. Major (Sieiro), four. Major Delgado, five. Captain (Camargo), six. Romulo Escobar, seven. (Vidio Souza), eight. And Blandon was nine. All these were delegations who came to hold talks. I have the content of all those discussions. I have here the transcript of every word everyone there said. I think this is very strong evidence.

Anyone who knows politics and knows about discussions and all, an intelligent individual, can understand very well what the talks are about. These conversations cannot be made up or fabricated. All these people are witnesses. There is some other evidence that I am keeping to myself. I have here everything that Blandon said on several topics. He says that he was here on 22 June. That's a total lie. I have my diary with the names of all the people who came all those days. He was not here. So, the most irrefutable proof that I have are the documents and files, to show that this kind of conversation never took place here with us. Never. It's a lie from top to bottom, from top to bottom. He told other lies. He has said many things. He has said, for instance, that Noriega was a kind of double agent, that he brought us CIA secrets on the United States and other governments. Noriega never gave us confidential information about the United States. That is a complete lie. He says...

[Shriver, interrupting] Do you think Gen Noriega may have given the United States any information about you?

[Castro] Well, I have no proof of that, no proof. But I do know that Noriega was never an agent against Cuba. He talks about a conversation with Noriega. He says that prior to the Grenada invasion...

[Shriver, interrupting] Before we get to Grenada. You are calling Jose Blandon a liar concerning your mediation in the dispute between groups...

[Castro, interrupting] That and other things.

[Shriver] That's number one.

[Castro] I have irrefutable evidence that he lied in the Senate, irrefutable proof. I have all the dates he came here, who he came with, and the stenographic transcripts of the conversations. I have the proof. If some senators of that committee want to come here from the United States, I invite them to do so. I will give them access to my files to prove what I am saying. Now, there are some materials, some documents that are politically sensitive, but I don't think the world is going to come to an end because of that. The world is not going to end just because I make this evidence available. I invite them to come. I will put in their hands all the evidence that shows that Blandon's statements are false, totally false.

[Shriver] What senators would you like to come to see your evidence?

[Castro] No, I don't want to choose them. They must be senators who are intelligent and who belong to the committee.

[Shriver] Senator John Kerry, who's been chairing the committee?

[Castro] Well, I don't know him, but if he wants to come, I don't mind if he comes. Whoever wants to come.

[Shriver] When would you like them to come?

[Castro] Whenever they want. Whenever they want.

[Shriver] Monday?

[Castro] Monday, Sunday, Saturday. I will give them access to my files on the conversations of the Panamanian delegations that came to Cuba, the ones that met with me. I will give them access to my files.

[Shriver] I would like to ask you: If Jose Blandon lied about your mediation, did you talk to Gen Noriega about that dispute to which he referred?

[Castro] Never. I am going to tell you something.

[Shriver] Did Gen Noriega call you personally?

[Castro] At the time of Grenada?

[Shriver] No, about the drug dispute. Did he talk to you independently of Jose Blandon?

[Castro] Never. Noriega once talked to me about a National Guard officer who had come into contact, had let himself be bribed by the mafia. He was very angry. He explained to me that he had taken drastic measures, that he had dismissed him from the Guard, and had turned him over to the courts. So, I say that as far as Cuba is concerned, I have the evidence that Blandon has miserably slandered Noriega. Now, then, did he do it to deceive the Senate? Or are there people in the United States who put those words in Blandon's mouth? I am referring here to those things...

[Shriver, interrupting] Who in the United States?

[Castro] Who could it be? It could have been the CIA, the State Department.

[Shriver] Why would someone do that?

[Castro] Because it seems strange to me. It seems there is a conspiracy in all of this. I think Blandon has been bribed. There are some people who say that Blandon was given $800,000 and that the person who paid Blandon must be giving him instructions. But they made a mistake, a serious mistake: They invented a total lie in regard to the conversations with me. I have a detailed record of all these conversations.

[Shriver] Who do you think bribed Blandon? Who paid that alleged $800,000?

[Castro] I have heard that said and I am not surprised. Rome pays its traitors. The United States pays its traitors. There have been several cases involving Cuban, Nicaraguan, Panamanian traitors. It's known that they have been given hundreds of thousands of dollars. Now, I have no proof to say who gave them the money. But I am convinced there is a conspiracy. I am convinced there is a lot of slander. I cannot discuss other things that Blandon might have said. But concerning his statements trying to implicate Noriega, these are fabrications from top to bottom, and I have the evidence.

[Shriver] Let me summarize, Mr President. Is it your theory that someone made Blandon lie to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to discredit Gen Noriega?

[Castro] I have irrefutable proof that some of the things he said are lies. I cannot pass judgment on everything he said. But several things he said are untrue. The first is this...

[Shriver, interrupting] Because if he had spoken to you it would be in your files.

[Castro] Every single word from the moment the first delegation came here. In general, I have a stenographic record of my meetings with delegations.

[Shriver] What if he spoke to you over the phone?

[Castro] Over the phone? It would be a bit odd if a man like Blandon were to call me on the phone and I were to be so naive to start talking on the phone with him. It is not my habit to do that, not my habit.

[Shriver] Let's discuss other things he said about you. He said that Vice President George Bush called Noriega and asked him to intervene to tell you that the U.S. troops were going to invade Grenada, that Noriega warned you about it and asked you not to fire on American troops.

Did Blandon contact Cuban intelligence to warn you?

[Castro] There are documents here. The invasion took place at dawn on the 25th. There was never any contact between Noriega and me prior to the 25th. Never.

[Shriver] Was there any contact between Blandon and Cuban intelligence?

[Castro] No. The only document I have is as follows. A message was received on 25 October at 2010. That means 8 o'clock at night. The document reads: Captain of the SID [not further identified] arrived home at 1900. He conveyed the following message from Noriega to the commander in chief. It literally says: Through us, the high-ranking American authorities are using a channel of credibility and relations. They do not want a confrontation with Cuban troops. They offer to assist in the departure of the Cuban contingent, as well as security for all belongings. Fifteen minutes later I personally talked with Gen Noriega over the phone. He confirmed to me the information supplied by the SID. He told me, wait for an answer, Commander in Chief, from a comrade of ours, Arturo, from Panama.

[Shriver] So you did have advance warning.

[Castro] No. The troops had disembarked in Grenada some 12 hours earlier. They had been fighting for 12 hours. This occurred on the 25th. Right. There are more messages. At 2015. Then, on the 26th at 0515. At 0550. There are several messages regarding Noriega's peace effort to avoid fighting there. The last time was a telephone call on the 26th at 0840. He talked to me on the phone on the 26th. The fighting was already going on. I have here the transcript not of what Noriega told me, because it was a conversation, I just went to the phone; however, what I told him was recorded. Not what he told me, but here it is, textually. So this has nothing to do with a previous warning. Bush's name was not once mentioned.

[Shriver] However, there is mention of a high-ranking American official.

[Castro] The message delivered to me on the evening of the 25th, in the evening, at 1900: Captain of the SID arrived home. He conveyed the following message from Noriega to the commander in chief. I am going to repeat it to you. It reads textually: Through us, the high-ranking American authorities are using a channel of credibility and relations. Even then...

[Shriver, interrupting] That could be George Bush.

[Castro] How am I to guess? It could be the Pentagon, the State Department. I have no proof. I never heard Bush mentioned. That was 12 hours after the landing. Twelve. Actually 13 or 14 hours after the landing.

[Shriver] Is it conceivable...

[Castro, continuing] Our people were still resisting. Noriega tried to avoid a battle. He says, they don't want a confrontation with us, they offer exit to the Cuban contingent, as well as security for all belongings. Fifteen minutes later, he [not further identified] talks to Noriega and Noriega confirms the information. This has nothing to do with what Blandon invented. Blandon says that prior to the invasion Noriega called to convey a message from Bush. That is a complete lie. Noriega got in touch with our embassy 13 hours after the landing, when the fighting was still going on. He was trying to avoid any more bloodshed. That has nothing to do with a warning.

[Shriver] Blandon says he notified Cuban intelligence in the name of Gen Noriega. Is it conceivable that you got the information late?

[Castro] It's not Blandon. It's the captain. It says so here. Captain of the SID. He's the one who talked with our people. It's there in the cable of that date. It arrived at 2010 and was delivered at 2055. The name of Blandon is nowhere. The one speaking is the SID captain. There was no previous warning. As I see it, Noriega's effort to prevent further bloodshed was a positive, constructive act. Now it becomes a reason for slander.

[Shriver] You talk about having irrefutable evidence in your transcripts. Could there have been other conversations of which you have no record?

[Castro] I think that anyone who reads the transcripts can see the kind of conversation there was. Now, the last time they came in January they brought a videocassette. Totally contrary to what Blandon says, they handed over a videocassette of an operation on a jungle laboratory.

It was a videocassette of a whole military operation. The military officers—there was not 1, there were 8, 9, 10 people—presented a videocassette of an operation against a drug laboratory. They presented a videocassette. They were proud of the operation. It was a big military feat. They explained how they had their initial suspicions. They were saying that some fishermen had spotted a helicopter go from a boat to the jungle. I have a videocassette of the operation. They gave it to me. There were about eight of them. They were proud. What I did was to congratulate them for what they were doing. I saw that they were proud. I found what they were doing very positive. That's the truth. And Blandon came that time when the videocassette was presented. That was 6 January 1985. So what he's saying is a lie. It's all a lie.

The National Guard has a sense of honor, of pride. What armed institution is going to talk to any foreign government to tell it that it is involved in a deal worth millions of pesos with a mafia? That's absurd. That has no logic. That's unthinkable. [Words indistinct] National Guard. How can any army, particularly an army with a sense of patriotism and nationalism, come to talk to us about a deal worth millions with a mafia. That has no rhyme or reason. The last delegation that came here presented a videocassette as, shall we say, proof of its stand on the mafia. They were proud of their cassette, as a military operation, a successful operation. It's the opposite of what this man is saying, that they came to ask for my advice for a problem they had created.

[Shriver] Correct me if I'm wrong, but the tape that you talked about has to do with the taking over of the drug operation in Panama?

[Castro] It's about the occupation of a laboratory. That was the last delegation that came here.

[Shriver] Of a drug laboratory in Panama?

[Castro] The last time, when Blandon came, they all came. It was an antidrug operation in Panama.

[Shriver] But this is the laboratory that Blandon referred to?

[Castro] It must be. It's the only one I know about.

[Shriver] And the Colombian drug cartel then got that laboratory back?

[Castro] They didn't say who it belonged to. They did not say. They said they had detected unusual movement in the jungle. They organized a military operation with paratroopers, helicopters, and they seized the laboratory. It was not even in operation. Apparently it was new; that's what they said.

[Shriver] But how did Gen Noriega turn that laboratory back over to the drug cartel?

[Castro] Who says that? Where does that come from? I have not heard anything about a laboratory being turned over. All I know about that is the videocassette, a film of the military operation they staged. It was a well-organized operation. They were proud of their military operation. I even congratulated them.

[Shriver] So Blandon did talk to you about seizing this laboratory.

[Castro] No, it was the military officers. I don't recall. It was the military.

[Shriver] But Blandon was in the room.

[Castro] Blandon was part of the group of nine. Why don't they talk to all those people?

[Shriver] And then you did not say in that meeting, I advise Gen Noriega to return...

[Castro, interrupting] How can I say such a thing when no one has asked me anything? The meeting is there, the topics discussed are there. The topics are the ones we always talk about. They were political issues. We never

talked about deals. You can see in these conversation the respect they feel for me, the ethical way we talked. These are hundreds, thousands of pages. There is not a single one in which you can read any type of relation in this connection. All those talks were governed by ethics, standards. The talks were very serious. Mine were very free. I gave my political views on all sorts of things. But it is inconceivable that an army can talk to the president of another country to explain that is has a deal with the mafia. That makes no sense. Blandon invented the whole thing. It's a lie, slander against Noriega.

[Shriver] Let me summarize to make sure that I am understanding all the information. These transcripts say that Blandon talked to you about the seizure of a cocaine production laboratory in Panama but that you did not mediate in that dispute or offer any advice.

[Castro] That last meeting, on 28 January [date as heard], was with nine Panamanians, most of them National Guard officers. They were young people, serious people. They presented the videocassette as a feather in the cap of the Guard. They were proud of what they had done. There was no talk about anything else except that the National Guard had carried out an important anti-drug operation. I imagine there are copies of that videocassette in many places. I imagine they sent it to the United States and other places. They sent one to us because we are friends, as an honorable action carried out by the National Guard. We must not forget that we are revolutionaries and that we practice certain ethics. That is reflected in all conversations, in the kind of conversation, relationship, respect [words indistinct]. So Blandon invented all that from top to bottom. I have all these people as witnesses. They were all there.

[Shriver] But do you have proof that perhaps there might be other conversations that are not included in the transcripts?

[Castro] How could it be? Let him prove it, not me. I never had that kind of relation with Blandon. There's not a single man [words indistinct].

[Shriver] Every conversation that you had is on record?

[Castro] It's absurd that I might have this kind of conversation. It's absurd, completely ridiculous. It's not worth taking seriously. The Panamanians can confirm this: Never was there a single visitor. From the beginning there were three or four or five. The smallest group consisted of two people. This was on 5 February 1982. Blandon and (Camargo).

[Shriver] Let me summarize where we are.

[Castro] I think this is enough. I have given you sufficient information. You are not a prosecutor or a judge.

[Shriver] I just want to be clear. You say that Blandon lied when he said you mediated in a dispute. [Word indistinct] as to giving you forewarning about the Grenada invasion.

[Castro] That is completely false. I have no proof of that. All we have are the documents, the only cable that our country received that day from our people.

[Shriver] Blandon also testified that you mediated in this dispute. You wanted to tell Noriega because you needed Panama as a conduit to bypass the American trade embargo.

[Castro] That's the biggest and most complete lie he has told. That's the one I have evidence on. If my evidence is analyzed by intelligent people, expert people, they will realize that it's all a lie. It's the biggest lie he has told. Now, we have been concerned about Panama for political reasons. We sympathize with Torrijos, with the pro-Torrijos movement, the National Guard, for their national struggle, their patriotic struggle, their effort to recover. We have always been concerned about Panama. Not because we have enterprises. We have enterprises in many places. We have enterprises in many places. [repeats himself] Noriega has never cooperated with us to bring in any technology. The secret of bringing in American technology...

[Shriver, interrupting] Has Noriega ever cooperated with you in exporting any kind of tobacco from Cuba to the United States?

[Castro] That I know of, that I know of. [repeats himself] Noriega has never given us that type of cooperation, nor do we need it. We feel we have the right to fight the blockade. This seems a moral, legitimate thing to do. Everything we can do to evade the blockade we will do. It's our right to evade the blockade. If we need medicine, medical equipment, technology, we feel the blockade is immoral and it is (?imposed on us). We try and we shall always try to evade the blockade by all means available. So, I am not denying that when we can, we evade the blockade. [Words indistinct] Noriega might have cooperated in that. It's a lie and it's slander. That's what I'm saying.

[Shriver] Who does cooperate in bypassing the blockade?

[Castro] You want me to tell you? You want me to help the State Department, the Commerce Department, the CIA, the U.S. Government? I am not willing to cooperate with the U.S. Government. I will not tell you who helps us, but I can tell you that Noriega has never cooperated. That's the truth. That's why I say there is a conspiracy. There's a shady, dirty conspiracy. Who is going to know better? They have accused Noriega of being a double agent. They have accused Noriega of evading the blockade. They have accused Noriega of warning Cuba prior to the invasion of Grenada. They

have accused him of being a spy. They have accused him of being a drug trafficker. They have accused him of asking me for advice to return some money. All that is lies, slander. All that is lies.

[Shriver] If Senator Kerry of the United States and other U.S. senators come here, will you open all of your transcripts, all your evidence to them?

[Castro] I will give them access to my files on this subject, on this subject. [repeats himself]

[Shriver] Absolutely everything having to do with the subject.

[Castro] I am willing. Let them come, let them come. I am not going to take this evidence and this material out. I am going to put my files at the service of the United States. I will give them access so they can see, so they can see, [repeats himself] with good translators so that they can translate everything for them.

[Shriver] Would you be willing to go to the United States and testify before the Foreign Relations Committee about what you told me?

[Castro] The Foreign Relations Committee? I would have to think about it. I don't know if it's worth it, but I am not afraid at all.

[Shriver] What do you think?

[Castro] If they let me take my own escort, I would go, because I don't trust policemen at all. I would go with my own security. Nothing else. If I can go. I am not the one to have the last word on this. I have to ask for the opinion of the comrades, the party leaders on all this. But I am not afraid of anything. I can face the whole Congress.

[Shriver] You are willing to go and testify if you can bring your own security?

[Castro] No, I have no reason to render those honors to the U.S. Government. I don't have to render those honors. But I have no fears. I like that kind of thing, I like those battles. But I don't want to give an answer on whether I will go or not. If I do, I will go with my own escort, duly armed and equipped.

[Shriver] But if they say you can come, armed and equipped, would you bring the information with you to prove that Blandon is a liar?

[Castro] Not for that. I would go to discuss many other things. If they are willing to have me discuss other problems—the blockade, Guantanamo Base, and other topics—I would be willing to go. But don't tell me I am going to take a plane to go there to discuss Blandon's affairs. In that case, it would be better for the senators, who travel so much, to take the trouble to come here. There's a lot of material. If they want to discuss many other topics, I will discuss things with the U.S. Congress for 3 days. Let them prepare themselves, and we will talk about all topics in 3 days. Now, for only this one subject, it would not be logical, not fair to ask me to go there. But, to discuss many things, including this one... [changes thought] Now, for this one thing, let them take the trouble to come to Havana for a weekend. They can talk with Castro about these things because Castro has good evidence.

If the people who come have brains, know psychology, they can analyze the kind of relationship we have. The material here shows the kind of relationship we have. The kind of relationship that exists is clear. You can have a certain relationship of friendship with me. Yet that doesn't mean that someone who listens to 20 conversations between you and me can come to the conclusion that I am talking to you about love, about the intimacy of your home, etc. Anyone who hears 20 conversations between you and me knows what kind of conversation there can be between you and me and what type of conversation there cannot be between you and me.

[Shriver] To summarize, you would be willing to let the United States' senators look at all your evidence, but you are not willing to go there to give evidence.

[Castro] I'm willing to go to discuss many other things. If they give me an agenda of things to discuss, I can spend 3 days discussing things with the U.S. Senate. I have many topics to discuss, but don't tell me to make a trip for this alone. This is like killing little birds with cannon shots. It makes no sense.

[Shriver] You brought up drug trafficking and Noriega. Is there any drug trafficking in Cuba?

[Castro] Listen, I'll tell you one thing. Cuba is the most drug-free country in the world. In the world. [repeats himself] Send sociologists and researchers here to see if there are drugs in Cuba and if we have any drug problems. This is the most drug-free country in the whole world. There's not a cleaner country in that respect than our country. That's the first thing. Second, there is no country that has so systematically fought drugs as Cuba has. There's none. I'll go even further. If all Latin American countries were like Cuba, the only drug consumed in the United States would be the drug produced in the United States. There are 250,000 commercial marijuana producers in the United States and 2 million who produce it for their own consumption. The United States is the main marijuana producer in the world. The market price of the marijuana produced in the United States is $26 billion.

[Shriver] Not talking about the United States for one moment, the Colombian drug cartel has never trafficked drugs for the United States through Cuba?

[Castro] Never, never. We are the country that has most systematically fought drugs in this hemisphere. I can categorically say to you: The United States is not winning nor can it win the war against drugs, because no Latin American country is really in a position to win the war against drugs. The only country that has won the war against drugs is Cuba, 29 years ago. The cleanest country in the world as regards drugs—that is what I can say. Now, as to our activities, we even have pamphlets—look, we have data here. From 1970 to 1988, captured drug traffickers who received severe sentences: 375. Of these, 108 were Americans and 267 were from other countries. Seized vessels: 61. Seized aircraft: 25. Confiscated and burnt marijuana. 359,366 pounds. Seized cocaine. 2 million... [corrects himself] 2,619 pounds. Actually, there's no cocaine traffic here. Rather, we were on the path of the marijuana traffic from Jamaica, the Caribbean, many places. The boats sometimes enter territorial waters and we capture them. In my opinion, the cocaine traffic uses safer channels and is more on a large scale—normal commercial lines. But the cocaine traffic does not pass through Cuba. They have safer channels. They even have commercial lines.

[Shriver] So those who allege that Fidel Castro has a relationship with the Colombian drug cartel are incorrect?

[Castro] If we had dealings with that mafia we would have already settled our foreign debt. [2-second break in reception] We have not done it because we do not have any obligation with the United States. We are under no obligation to the United States. The United States is the drug market. The drug market in the United States bears a great deal of responsibility in this drug trade.

[Shriver] But drugs come to the United States from other places.

[Castro] We have done it out of principle, ethics, respect for our laws. All those who have come here with drugs have been arrested. They have been severely sanctioned. We have the data here, all the data.

[Shriver] But in response to my question, there is no relationship between [words indistinct].

[Castro] I feel I would be denigrating myself by answering that question. It is miserable, wholesale slander. I don't even have to stoop to deny that. And I don't care. I will say something more, something more: I don't care. Our dignity prevents us from stooping to deny this kind of thing. Our history, our life, our dedication to the revolution—it is not a problem of morals, it's a matter of principle. It is not an obligation to the United States, because we are under no obligation to cooperate with a country that blockades us and that attacks us. We are under no moral obligation to this country. We do it out of principle.

[Shriver] You said something interesting about wanting to go to the United States to talk about the Blandon information and to discuss other subjects.

[Castro] I will discuss all topics, and the last one will be Blandon—the Guantanamo Base, the blockade, the U.S. selfish policy toward the Third World, the unequal trade. I can talk about everything the senators want, everything they want. They can bring up Blandon last, but we'll include him, too.

[Shriver] Is that a change in the way you view the United States?

[Castro] I've never been invited to the United States to discuss things. The United States makes statements of all kinds, but it never talks to me about discussing things. So, I would like to see if they resist a discussion with me. I am willing to discuss many worthwhile subjects with the whole Senate. If they are interested, I can consult with my people.

[Shriver] You're just waiting for an invitation.

[Castro] No, I'm not waiting for anything. I am simply answering a question. I am not inviting myself or proposing an invitation. I am answering your question.

[Shriver] Do you think the United States was right to indict Gen Noriega?

[Castro] I don't think so, because the United States' only purpose is political. The United States has had excellent relations with Noriega—the Pentagon, the CIA, the State Department, everybody. It has had excellent relations, better than with us. Why all this campaign now? Because it wants to get rid of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. Because it wants to keep the canal. Because it wants to separate the National Guard from its political role in Panama.

[Shriver] So you don't think it has anything to do with drugs; rather, it is motivated by politics.

[Castro] Well, I say the United States' motivation is not the war against drugs. It is politics. It wants to liquidate the Torrijos process. It wants to take away the political role of the National Guard, because the National Guard has a patriotic and nationalist role to play. That's what it wants. Drugs are just a pretext. It's a big campaign to do away with the National Guard, not Noriega. What it really wants is to take the National Guard out of politics, because under Torrijos' leadership the National Guard took the country to negotiations with the United States.

[Shriver] Why are you coming out so much in support of Noriega now?

[Castro] I'm not supporting Noriega. I am supporting the Torrijos movement. I am supporting the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. I am supporting the sovereignty and independence of Panama. It's not Noriega the man who matters. The important thing is independence, sovereignty, Panama's right to the canal, the Torrijos movement, which in our opinion is a progressive, patriotic, and nationalist movement. It is not a socialist or a communist movement; it is a patriotic and nationalist movement. That's what we support, independently from Noriega the man. What I see is that it is using this campaign against Noriega to get rid of the other things, not Noriega. It is not Noriega. So, all these charges are only an orchestrated campaign. I remember when the first one was concocted. Poindexter was still on the job. The campaign against Noriega was organized because he opposed the plans against Nicaragua. Those are the facts. I remember because I knew, I received confidential reports, very reliable, absolutely true reports, about Poindexter's plan to eliminate Noriega because of the problems in Central America.

[Shriver] To assassinate him?

[Castro] No, I don't think so. Rather, a campaign to discredit and oust him. So, I'm not defending Noriega. I'm defending the sovereignty and the independence of Panama, the Torrijos' political process, and Panama's rights to the canal.

[Shriver] But when you say you have information [words indistinct].

[Castro] Get rid of him, him and the National Guard. Noriega is right when he says the cause of the conflict is that he refused to obey Poindexter's orders. I believe it because we received information at the time, absolutely true reports, about the plans for this campaign against Noriega. They used Noriega as the instrument for this.

[Shriver] The plan we are now seeing in the United States?

[Castro] That was the first wave of charges. That was when he was accused of being a Cuban double agent. A series of charges were made. Now these charges are being repeated much more strongly.

[Shriver] Do you think Noriega should step down?

[Castro] Why? To please the enemies of Panama's sovereignty? What for? He should do what he feels is fitting. In sum, what matters is not a person, a man; what matters is a cause. What matters are a country's rights. The problem is not that they want to eliminate Noriega. They want to take the National Guard out of the Panamanian political process, because the National Guard is the guarantee of the country's sovereignty and independence. It's the guarantee of the canal.

[Shriver] What do you think of Gen Noriega? Do you think he's an honorable man?

[Castro] I believe he's at least a courageous man because he has faced the most terrible campaign against him. I admire his staunchness and I know he's a man with nationalistic and patriotic feelings. He was a follower of the Torrijos movement. That's what I say about Noriega.

[Shriver] And you don't think he's a double agent.

[Castro] To be a double agent he would have to be one of our agents. He's not our agent. Therefore, he can't be a double agent, because he's not an agent of ours. If he ever worked with the United States, I can neither confirm nor refute it. But I say that it's a lie that he's been a double agent, because he was never our agent.

[Shriver] But when you hear allegations that he might have been a double agent, do you worry, does it make you pause that perhaps he may be telling the United States things about you?

[Castro] The other time, when they made this charge, I spoke and said this is a lie, this is slander. I didn't think I should remain silent. Now, too, I felt I shouldn't remain silent in the face of these assertions. Not because they are trying to involve us. I don't care a fig. Many lies have been said against Cuba and the revolution in the past 30 years. I don't care about that. But I felt I could not remain with my arms crossed when I have information and evidence that show that Blandon is lying. So, I also said on the other occasion that it was not true that Noriega was a double agent. I made my statement, which was published all over the world, in Panama. Whenever I may see slander, lies which I know to be so, a conspiracy not against Noriega but against the Panamanian people, against Panama's rights over the canal, against the sovereignty and independence of Panama, I will always speak up and I will always defend it. In the end, what interests me is the cause of the Panamanian people. We are not interested in individual personalities. We are interested in institutions. We are interested in the National Guard, because it is an institution which, under Torrijos' leadership, adopted a patriotic and nationalist stance. I will defend it. I defend institutions. I do not defend individuals.

[Shriver] Let's move to another subject. I want to talk to you about Central America. Do you support Arias' plan?

[Castro] Well, we support the peace plan and the idea of a political solution. We did even before the Arias plan, because the Contadora plan came before the Arias plan. The Contadora countries worked very hard. They were first four, then four more. There was Peru, Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina. They were seeking a political solution. We have always supported a political solution. The Arias plan moves in that direction, which we believe is the correct one. We support that plan.

[Shriver] Do you think the Arias peace plan will work?

[Castro] Well, the Arias plan has already played a role, inasmuch as it has paved the way for important steps—talks, negotiations. It has influenced the evolution of events.

[Shriver] What has been the most important influence, in your opinion?

[Castro] It got the Central American governments to talk. I think it awakened a sense of independence among the Central American governments to a greater or lesser degree—in the case of Guatemala, to a high degree. I believe the Guatemalan Government has observed an independent position—Costa Rica's stance to a high degree, also.

Up to the Arias government, Costa Rica had collaborated with the counterrevolution. Counterrevolutionary bands were moving on the Nicaragua-Costa Rica border. The CIA supplied and aided the bands from Costa Rica. Arias assumed a nobler stand, an independent stand. He understood the interests of Central America and changed the policy of the previous governments. So, three governments that had a constructive position got together. They were Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Nicaragua—El Salvador, to a certain extent, since it has a strong revolutionary movement within its borders. It was interested in seeing what specific kinds of advantages it could extract from the situation. The Honduran Government is very much subjected to that of the United States. It is quite interested in the money it receives in its role as a counterrevolutionary base. The Honduran Government was the most timid supporter of the plan. Therefore, in this sense, the Arias' initiative played an important role. I think the Nobel Prize jury understood the importance of his role and opted to support the movement by granting Arias the Nobel Peace Prize. Although peace has not been achieved, the effort has been positive.

I feel the country that has made the biggest contribution to this peace effort has been Nicaragua. It's the one that has made the biggest efforts, and I can attest to that.

[Shriver] Why?

[Castro] Well, because it is the country that is being attacked. It is the victim of a dirty war that has cost tens of thousands of lives—as much as if a dirty war in the United States had cost it 3 million lives. Fifty thousand Nicaraguans are the equivalent of 3 million Americans. Imagine if someone had waged a dirty war against the United States that would have meant the loss of 3 million lives, one that would have caused hundreds of billions in losses. That's what this dirty war has cost Nicaragua. It is involved in that war. It is being attacked. It is a kind of sustained Giron. It has cost many lives and sacrifices. And yet Nicaragua made concessions in the midst of a war situation. It allowed newspapers at the service of the counterrevolution and U.S. interests to open. Those newspapers defend the cause against national interests. Nicaragua made concessions of all sorts, of all sorts, [repeats himself] to show its good faith, its good will.

[Shriver] You equate war in Nicaragua to the Bay of Pigs?

[Castro] The dirty war is worse. Much worse.

[Shriver] But it's similar?

[Castro] From the political point of view, it pursues the same objective. There was a dirty war here, too. But we were an island. We did not have borders on the north or the south. The weapons had to be supplied by sea or by air. We quickly mobilized the entire population and we armed the people in the mountains, in the valleys, everywhere. Despite this, we had to fight for 5 years to liquidate the counterrevolutionary bands. It is not easy. It's enough to have the support of a minority; they can hold on indefinitely. Especially when the United States supports them and when they think that sooner or later the United States will intervene, will invade.

For us it meant 5 years of fighting. It was not only Giron. We had Giron and we had the dirty war: sabotage, armed gangs in all the country's provinces. In that sense, they are similar. However, Nicaragua has a smaller population, has more land, more mountains, borders to the north and the south. Nicaragua is harder to defend than the island of Cuba.

[Shriver] You mention an opposition press in Nicaragua that allowed that.

[Castro] A counterrevolutionary press at the service of U.S. policy.

[Shriver] That is something that doesn't exist here. Do you think it was a mistake?

[Castro] It does not exist nor will it ever exist. Let no one even dream about it. We eliminated privately owned mass media here. The mass media belongs to the people, the party, the youth. Workers have their own newspaper, peasants have their own paper, women have their own paper.

[Shriver] There will never be an opposition press here.

[Castro] There will not be a so-called press, a press at the service of the interest of Cuba's enemies, of the enemies of the revolution. A press which is at the service of the U.S. policy does not exist and will never exist. I have to tell you this very honestly.

[Shriver] I will come back to that later. Do you think it was a mistake for Daniel Ortega to allow that?

[Castro] No, I do not think it was a mistake. It was not a mistake [preceding word rendered in English] as she says. [Castro comments to interpreter] I do not think it is a mistake. I believe the situation in Nicaragua is different.

[Shriver] You would have not done it.

[Castro] I do not know. I shouldn't pass judgment on that. We have never done it. That is all I can say. Now, Nicaragua is in the midst of this whole Latin American movement, of this Latin American effort to resolve a Latin American problem, in the midst of this entire peace effort. I believe it might imply a big sacrifice, but I cannot criticize what they did. [Words indistinct] after the Esquipulas I meeting, Daniel came here and explained the talks, the agreements, the policy, and we supported him. We as a principle [words indistinct]. If they want to open a newspaper, we will support them. If they want to open 10, we will support them. Whatever they do, if they want to hold Western-style elections as they do in the United States, we will support them. We will support what the Sandinists do.

[Shriver] Regardless of what they do.

[Castro] Yes. That is the duty of friends and brothers. We admire what they have done. They have shown courage within a mixed economy and multipartyism concept. Those were the banners of the Sandinist revolution. I believe it is possible to have those so-called opposition parties, which are against the revolution, and this counterrevolutionary press at the service of the United States—because the paper and the money of the press is paid by the United States. It is possible. But we do not have and will not have mixed economy and we do not have and will not have multipartyism. Our people are very united. Marti did it in the independence war. He organized the party of the revolution and all revolutionaries. We have the party of all revolutionaries here. I categorically say that we are not planning on having any kind of multipartyism or any type of mixed economy. Our revolution went deeper than (?dictatorship). It reached a point of no return. We are totally pleased with what we are doing.

[Shriver] Let me back over to Nicaragua for a moment. How do you describe your relation with Daniel Ortega?

[Castro] They are very friendly relations. They are so not only with Daniel. You tend to personalize political processes. You say Castro's Cuba, Daniel Ortega's Nicaragua. Cuba is not Castro's and Nicaragua is not Daniel's. The Americans tend to identify the processes with an individual. [Words indistinct] I have good relations with Daniel, I have a very high opinion of him. He is very intelligent. I have excellent relations with all the leaders and with all Nicaraguan revolutionaries. I have a friendly and brotherly relationship.

[Shriver] Many people say he is a protege of yours.

[Castro] I believe there is no revolution that is a protege of another, because one of the strongest feelings in any country, whether it is big or small—but it is even greater in the smaller countries than in the big ones—is the sense of independence, of national dignity. It is very strong in them, in us, and in all of our countries. And the excellent countries among revolutionaries all over the world, with progressive countries, is that we have never treated those countries with hegemony, we have never treated them as being dependent on us. We have always respected their ideas. I am going to tell you the secret of our relations with revolutionaries throughout all these years. It is the respect of ideas, opinions, views, and independence of each revolutionary organization. This is the secret of our excellent relations.

[Shriver] There are those who say that you advise Daniel Ortega and that one of the pieces of advice you gave him is to manage the United States with moderation.

[Castro] I do not know where that came from. I can tell you the following. It is a practice I follow. I never give anybody any advice unless someone asks for it. I do not give my opinion on what they are doing unless they ask me for it.

[Shriver] Has he asked you?

[Castro] He has asked many times. Among revolutionaries we ask each others opinions. Because of age, of experience... [changes thought] They can ask us for our views. Panamanians have asked us for our views on the political problem, Nicaraguans have asked for our views—views, not advice.

[Shriver] Has Daniel Ortega asked you your opinion on how to deal with the United States?

[Castro] No. Not that I recall. Our relations go back many years, since they were fighting in the mountains, since long before the triumph of the revolution. They were very close relations. It would be wrong to tell them not to make mistakes. We have not made any mistakes regarding our relations with the United States. I do not think we have made any mistakes [words indistinct] absolutely nothing regarding our relations with the United States. So it would be very difficult to tell Ortega not to do what we did because what we did was necessary for the Cuban revolution to survive. If we had not done it, the revolution would not have survived in front of a country as powerful as the United States. Had it not been because of the firmness of the revolution, the determination to go ahead, our revolution would not have survived.

[Shriver] You never think that in this almost 30 years you have been in power you have made one mistake regarding the United States?

[Castro] Strategic errors, no.

[Shriver] You were young, you needed power, you were inexperienced, rebellious. Looking back...

[Castro, interrupting] Had we been this mature at at the beginning of the revolution perhaps we would have managed the situation a little more cold-bloodedly, with more wisdom. Of course, more experience would have logically helped us more. If we didn't have experience, the United States had less, because the United States was not prepared to accept the idea of an independent country in Latin America, a revolutionary country in Latin America, and a socialist country in Latin America. They were not mentally prepared for that. It had much less experience. If mistakes have been made here, the United States has made many more. I believe that if we were to begin the revolution now, we would do the same basic things. Maybe we would use more diplomacy, we would have been more calm. We would have treated such an inexperienced country with a little more patience and wisdom. Do you understand?

Today the United States is also more experienced. At that time it had nothing to do with China. China was the Red threat, the yellow threat, the threat of all colors. They wouldn't even talk about China in 1959, 1960. Nothing. The USSR was the evil empire and had no relations. Today U.S. relations with China [words indistinct], relations with the USSR are excellent. We are left with the honor of being one of the few adversaries of the United States.

[Shriver] That's an honor?

[Castro] Of course it is an honor. Because for such a small country as Cuba to have such a gigantic country as the United States live so obsessed with this small island, a country that no longer considers itself an adversary of the USSR or adversary of China and considers itself an adversary of Cuba—it is an honor for us.

[Shriver] The Soviet Union no longer has the honor?

[Castro] Well, it seems it has the honor of having friendly relations with the United States, for which we are glad.

[Shriver] So it has a different kind of honor.

[Castro] It is a different kind of honor. Someday we might also have the honor of having good relations with the United States. For the time being, we have the honor of being a great adversary of the United States. At least we are a firm adversary, an adversary that does not give in, that does not give, and a very morally strong adversary.

[Shriver] And that makes you proud.

[Castro] We have no other choice of being proud of that.

[Shriver] What could the United States do to make sure that the Arias peace plan works?

[Castro] Well, the administration would have to be persuaded that the dirty war leads to no solution. I know the Sandinists. They are very patriotic, very nationalistic, and very courageous, very courageous. [repeats himself] They are not going to be able to do away with them with the dirty war. If that dirty war goes on, hundreds and hundreds of more people will be killed. If a U.S. intervention takes place, then hundreds of thousands would be killed. So the administration would have to be persuaded to simply accept a peace policy, because the administration's policy is to destroy.

I believe the Congress' attitude has been positive, constructive. I believe that what the Congress has done by rejecting the proposal for more funds is one of the most constructive things that has been done to achieve peace in Central America. I believe the U.S. people maintain a good attitude. I understand that most of the U.S. people oppose the dirty war against Nicaragua and that many people in the United States oppose that wrong, inappropriate, obsolete policy followed by Reagan as to Nicaragua. I believe the Americans are doing what they can when the majority of the people oppose that. I believe the people who think in the United States must struggle to continue to oppose this warmongering dirty war venture.

[Shriver] If the Arias peace plan called for all foreign military aid to end, would you withdraw your support to Nicaragua and try to help [words indistinct]?

[Castro] We give Nicaragua different kinds of help. We give them political aid...

[Shriver, interrupting] I am talking about military. Would you be willing to withdraw your military support?

[Castro] We have a number of advisers and instructors. They played a more important role at the beginning when the Nicaraguans did not have an army and didn't have cadres to organize the [words indistinct] force. I believe our aid was important during that period of time. Today it is no longer as important. It is more a matter of moral solidarity. We cannot withdraw unilaterally our military personnel there. We do not have troops there. There are instructors and advisers. Actually, we do not have troops, we have no military units in Nicaragua. Unilaterally we cannot do that. But we accept and support what the Nicaraguans decide to do in this regard.

[Shriver] Under what conditions would you do that? Under what conditions would you withdraw your military support?

[Castro] Under the conditions the Nicaraguans establish. When Daniel Ortega came here after the first Esquipulas agreement we issued a joint statement. We expressed the willingness to withdraw foreign military personnel to the extent to which the United States withdraws its own. Now then, if Esquipulas [words indistinct] on withdrawing all military we would welcome it wholeheartedly. We

would agree with it. But we will only do it if the Nicaraguans agree. We will not do it unilaterally. The withdrawal of all foreign military personnel from Central America is an excellent idea. We support it. I am sure the Nicaraguans will support it as well. But the Nicaraguans have the last word on this. We cannot say on our own: I will withdraw personnel. We will do it if they consider it necessary.

[Shriver] You would also withdraw from El Salvador?

[Castro] We have no military advisers or instructors at all.

[Shriver] Any support?

[Castro] Well, support, yes. Why should I deny it? We will give the Salvadoran patriots all the support we can give them. Now, if there is peace, we support peace. If the Salvadoran revolutionaries hold discussions with the Salvadoran Government and reach a peace agreement, we will support them. We would actually welcome it. But as long as there isn't a peaceful solution, and as long as the Salvadoran patriots struggle, they will receive our sympathy and support to the extent of our capabilities.

[Shriver] How would you describe your support?

[Castro] It depends. We give them political and moral support. That is the fundamental support we give the Salvadorans, because the Salvadoran revolutionaries have managed to become self-sufficient in weapons and to resist the enormous flow of economic and military resources the United States has given to the Duarte government. They are admirable. Among the revolutionaries that I admire most in the world are the Salvadorans because of their courage, ability to resist, heroism, intelligence. They are admirable people. There is little we can teach them because today we can all learn from the Salvadorans. We ourselves have learned from them. How such a small country, 20,000 square km in area, has been able to keep up a resistance for almost 8 years against genocidal armies backed by the United States. We have learned military tactics from them. At the beginning we taught them. Today, we are learning from them. Today, we are learning from their experience.

[Shriver] What are you learning?

[Castro] Tactics. How they have managed this.

[Shriver] What kind of tactics?

[Castro] Military tactics; their ability to disperse, to regroup, to resist. They have proven the endless possibilities of the people in their struggle. If at the beginning, during the first few years, we could teach them, today they are teaching us. They can teach us in irregular warfare. I am not saying that in normal warfare they know more than we do.

[Shriver] Let me back up to my original question. If the Arias peace plan did call for the end of all foreign military support, including the United States', everybody, you would be prepared to withdraw your support?

[Castro] I think that if all military support and all direct or indirect participation ceases in Central America, we would totally agree. We would totally agree, [repeats himself] without any discussion. Let all sorts of military activities, advisers, or military aid cease.

But as long as it gives incredible amounts of aid to the genocidal government of Duarte, the United States cannot demand that others stop helping the Salvadoran revolutionaries. If the government [words indistinct] considers itself of helping the counterrevolutionaries in Angola, in other countries, in Nicaragua, in other countries, what moral right do they have to ask revolutionary countries not to help the revolutionaries in El Salvador? When the United States sets the example of not waging dirty wars, of not helping the counterrevolutionaries against established governments, of not requiring others not to help the revolutionary movement...

[Shriver, interrupting] Are you just helping all these other places just because the United States is doing the opposite? You sound like you are more...

[Castro, interrupting] No, no. We help the Salvadoran revolutionaries because it is a just cause, because of principles. But since you asked me if we were willing to accept the rule that no one would help no one, I would agree to that, that the revolutionaries not help the revolutionaries, and that the United States not help the counterrevolutionaries anywhere—we would agree then. That was not the reason. But if that principle was set forth, and the United States would commit itself to do so, we would also commit ourselves to do that. Is that clear? The reason for one thing was not the same for the other. But the question is, would we be willing to adhere to this principle, and I say yes.

[Shriver] Do you think the Arias peace plan should ask that?

[Castro] What should it ask? Yes. It would be great if the Arias plan asked that, the end of all the business of military aid to Central America.

[Shriver] For everyone.

[Castro] For everyone, and we would accept the principle.

[Shriver] You brought up Angola.

[Castro] Yes.

[Shriver] How many troops do you have in Angola now?

[Castro] Enough to deal with the problems there. The necessary ones.

[Shriver] Forty thousand?

[Castro] No, I will not give you figures. I am sorry, but there is no reason for me to give you that information. I know very well the attitude, man by man, weapon by weapon, but I cannot please you. I can tell you that we have enough to face the South African adventure.

[Shriver] It is estimated that there are approximately 40,000 Cubans. You don't know, you don't want to say. You know.

[Castro] That could be a more or less estimate. Sometimes estimates are far from the reality.

[Shriver] For a long time you wanted to become part of the ongoing talks. In January you took part in them. How are you going to use the Cuban position at the bargaining table to reach an agreement in Angola?

[Castro] I believe the Angolan issue is quite clear for us. We are in Angola because we have helped Angolans fight South Africa. Many countries, many people speak of apartheid, of racism, fascism, but the only country that has really helped with men to struggle against the attacks of apartheid and racism is Cuba. Therefore, I believe the most honorable and noble mission any country has undertaken is the one conducted by our country in Angola. Despite the fact that it is a small country, we have maintained ourselves firmly there for almost 13 years.

[Shriver] At great cost.

[Castro] Well, that is possible because we have people willing to go. [Words indistinct] how can such a small country do something like that if they do not have foreign currency, if they do not have a strong economy, it is not a rich country? We are not wealthy in money but we are wealthy in awareness, in internationalist spirit. We are a very wealthy, generous people. Since you asked me for a figure, I can tell you that about 300,000 Cubans have gone through Angola on a voluntary basis during these 13 years. I ask myself if there is any other country with the political and revolutionary quality of ours. We are such a small country, yet 300,000 citizens have gone there to fulfill military internationalist missions.

[Shriver] But let me ask you, Mr President, how are you going to use your position now as part of these ongoing talks to bring an end to this?

[Castro] I am going to answer you. I was explaining to you. In Angola we have no strategic interest. We are not a big power. We have no economic interest. We do not have a single piece of property in Angola. Our aid is absolutely loyal, disinterested, with solidarity, with internationalist spirit. Therefore, whenever there is peace in Angola, the ones to benefit the most are us. We have never opposed a political solution in Angola. We have always supported the decisions made by the Angolan Government. If the Angolan Government wants to reach a political solution, we will support it. In that sense the initiative is in the hands of the Angolan Government, and we support it. We saw that the talks between Angola and the United States were being prolonged. In our view, the United States followed a path that was not equitable. The delegation came before the Angolans and asked them for concessions. The Angolans would make certain concessions but they offered nothing. They would say they were going to talk with the South Africans to see if they agreed. So they asked for more and new concessions. They demanded unilateral concessions from Angola while South Africa continued with its intervention in Angola.

We realized that as part of the conflict our participation would help the Angolans and the negotiations.

[Shriver] How has it helped?

[Castro] We could help to find a formula that would deceive nobody, because sometimes the formula proposed to the Angolans deceived the Angolans.

[Shriver] What is the formula? Now that you are there, you are part of the talks, what is the formula?

[Castro] In common agreement, because we do not have a unilateral position—nor can we have it—we reached an agreement with the Angolans. To come out of the stagnation of the talks, we proposed a global solution to the problem. In exchange for a global solution, we were willing to accept the idea of a complete withdrawal of Cuban troops. That was an important step, because the troops in the south were always discussed. The troops in the north were not discussed. Those would stay there indefinitely. But the negotiations had come to a deadlock. Therefore, Angola and Cuba took a step forward so as to unlock the negotiations. In the face of a global solution, we were willing to accept the idea of total withdrawal in a prudential period of time to be determined.

Now then, what were the requirements for a global solution from our point of view? First, the cessation of all interference in Angola's internal affairs. In two words: the cessation of any dirty war against the legitimate Government of Angola on the part of the people who were responsible for that dirty war. They are South Africa and the United States. The application of UN Resolution 435. International security guarantees for Angola. In that case, Angola and Cuba, in common accord, would proceed to withdraw all military personnel, all Cuban troops in Angola.

[Shriver] What's the timetable?

[Castro] Well, what was agreed was the following. Right now there is a certain—I will not say stagnation—there are certain things that have yet to be clarified. The Americans are asking the Angolans for a timetable. But the Angolans say the timetable is the last item. They say the timetable will be the result of the negotiations and that it implies the resolution of the items they have presented: an end to the dirty war, which is very legitimate; the application of 435...

[Shriver, interrupting] Why can't they happen simultaneously?

[Castro] They could happen simultaneously. But I am saying that there is a misunderstanding. The Angolans are waiting for one thing, and the Americans are waiting for another.

[Shriver] So, how are you going to help resolve the situation?

[Castro] We are part of the Angolan delegation. We have worked in mutual agreement, and we will continue doing so. We will continue working to find a [words indistinct] Angolans have said, why are they asking me to prepare a timetable when they have not yet given me the assurance that there will not be any interference in Angola's internal affairs, or any dirty wars. That is what they are saying, which is very fair. Now, there is somewhat of a misunderstanding. That is that each party is expecting something from the other. I think, anyway, that some steps must be taken in the near future to overcome this misunderstanding.

[Shriver] So, if they were given assurances, what would their timetable be?

[Castro] We have to discuss that with the Angolans. We also have to discuss it with the Americans who are acting as intermediaries. Because the problem here is that the United States to a certain extent is an intermediary, and at the same time it is a belligerent party. It is a godfather of the dirty war, a participant in the dirty war against Angola, and as such is actually part of the problem. It is a country interested in playing what they call a mediating role, so it plays the role of mediator. But the United States is playing a double role: on the one hand the role of mediator; and on the other as part of the conflict.

[Shriver] So, there is no calendar and things are deadlocked?

[Castro] At this moment there is a certain misunderstanding. It is not that they are deadlocked. A lot of progress was made at the meeting in Luanda, progress was made. But these items remained. The Angolans were asking the Americans if the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of Angola could be established; that is, if it would stop practicing the dirty war. The Americans were asking Angola and Cuba for a timetable. That is where we are. It is not an unsurmountable misunderstanding. I think both sides can make progress. The United States can make progress if it agrees to guarantee it will not interfere in Angola's internal affairs, and Angola can make progress, along with Cuba, if it draws up a more or less simultaneous timetable.

[Shriver] General Secretary Gorbachev has spoken recently about the need for communist bloc nations develop a fresher approach on the conflicts in the world—Afghanistan, Angola. Do you share that view, or are you out of step?

[Castro] Yes, I share that view. I don't think any two problems are the same. The Afghan problem is not the same as Nicaragua's nor is it the same as Cambodia's or Angola's. There are many problems in the world.

[Shriver] What would your fresh approach be? What is your fresh approach?

[Castro] I share the Soviet peace policy. I believe its concern for peace is one of the most constructive things that has happened in recent times. I believe it has destroyed myths, barriers, and to a certain extent it has given way to a very important opening in an area in which only the first steps have been taken, the first steps have been taken. [repeats himself]

[Shriver] But you share their desire, their views to get out of conflicts.

[Castro] Without any doubt. We agree in the search for international detente and in working on the search to find the solution to regional problems. We are in agreement. Now, it all depends on how that is interpreted. If the United States considers detente as peace between the United States and the USSR, between the United States and China, and war against small countries, then there will be no solution to regional problems. If the United States shares the desire to look for the solution of regional problems, then solutions will be found to regional problems. It depends on the approach of the United States to this problem. If the United States wants to eliminate revolutionary governments such as Nicaragua, the Nicaraguans will never give in. If the United States wants to eliminate the revolutionary regime in Angola, the Angolans are not going to surrender. Do you see? The approach from this side is not enough, but the approach of the other side is also important. It is not only the approach of the USSR and socialist countries; the approach of the United States is very important. Is it perhaps an opportunistic approach? Does the United States want to make peace with the large socialist powers and make war with small socialist countries? Does the United States want to continue its war against Cuba, Nicaragua, and Angola? We will continue to fight. There is not the slightest doubt that we will continue to fight as long as it is necessary.

[Shriver] As the United States develops better relations with the Soviet Union, do you feel left out?

[Castro] Not at all. We would very happy because everything that benefits international peace indirectly benefits us. Everything that benefits the development of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp benefits us indirectly. It is very useful for us.

[Shriver] In what way?

[Castro] Not to mention our sense of responsibility, which makes us aware of the seriousness of the risks of a nuclear war; they have existed and still exist in the world. Aside from that, in every sense, I believe the Soviet peace policy is useful for all mankind.

[Shriver] But when you see Ronald Reagan...

[Castro, interrupting] If the money the USSR and socialist countries have to invest in weapons is saved, they can invest that money in their own development and in cooperation with Third World countries. So all of us Third World countries benefit. If this speeds up the technological development of the Soviet Union, the countries that have good relations of cooperation with the Soviet Union would also benefit. So it is very beneficial for all and even for us. But I do not trust the ideas of the current administration. I do not trust them. I mistrust the opportunistic attitude the U.S. Administration might have. Maybe their approach is to achieve peace with the big socialist powers and to wage war on the progressive and socialist countries of the Third World. That could be the case, because there is a report around by a group of Pentagon advisers who talk of developing conventional weapons, low-intensity warfare, with the objective of promoting the dirty war against progressive governments, and at the same time...

[Shriver, interrupting] Like you, like you?

[Castro] Yes, Cuba, Nicaragua, Angola, Ethiopia, and other countries. And at the same time, at the same time...

[Shriver, interrupting] Do you think the United States is planning to invade you?

[Castro] We'll talk about that later. And at the same time, helping reactionary governments against the revolutionary movement. I do not have the complete report, but I could perhaps get it. Maybe Kissinger and others who have worked on it might be good enough to send it to us. I don't think it's a secret document because the press has already talked about it. So, I am mistrustful, and I suspect that the opportunistic idea exists in the minds of some people in the United States to make peace with the big socialist powers and war on the small progressive and socialist countries of the Third World.

[Shriver] You are talking in particular about President Reagan.

[Castro] You had a specific question. What was it? I am talking about this administration and the one to come. No one knows what kind of administration is coming next. These are Pentagon advisers who are putting forth this theory.

[Shriver] My specific question was, do you think the United States is planning to invade Cuba.

[Castro] I don't think so, I don't think so. You know why? Because it can't. If the United States invades Cuba, it's going to break its teeth. It's not that we are going to sink the U.S. flotilla or even destroy the U.S. Air Force. This country has organized itself in such a way, it has come together in such a way, and it has prepared itself in such a way, that if the United States tries to invade Cuba, it's going to break its teeth. It is going to have to fight millions of men and women, and even children. No matter how powerful, the United States can't do that. It would need millions of troops. It would have to pay such a high price that I feel you Americans would not allow it. Therefore, I'm not worried. There might be a madman. Any government could go crazy. Therefore, we cannot trust logic. Logic indicates it can't do it. But we are not afraid, because we feel very secure. We have an organized and armed people. We are an impossible bone to swallow. So, in that sense we are at ease. And we are going to remain always alert, always prepared; we'll always have sufficient resistance capacity so that we might be respected. We would prefer...

[Shriver, interrupting] You sound like a country taunting the United States. Like someone that's taunting them. Try me, try me.

[Castro] What for? We have no particular interest in doing so. We are not taunting them. I am answering a question, whether we are afraid of an invasion. And we say, no. We feel capable of resisting U.S. intervention. Not now, after 30 years. We have millions of organized and trained men and women all over the country, from one end to the other.

[Shriver] Let me back up to talking about...

[Castro, interrupting] So no matter how powerful it might be, the United States could break its teeth against this resistance.

I am not taunting or daring them. We don't want conflict. On the contrary, we want knowledgeable, peace-loving, intelligent people who won't go berserk. I am answering your question. Don't tell me that I am challenging the honor of Americans.

[Shriver] OK. You know that General Secretary Gorbachev has made many changes in the Soviet Union, a more open society, glasnost. What effect has that had in Cuba?

[Castro] Well, I would like to tell you the following. Everything that the Soviet Union does has an effect everywhere. It is a big country. It has an effect on Europe, the United States. It has a great effect on the Third World, the socialist countries, and Cuba, as well. Do you understand? Now, our country made the revolution on our own. No one made the revolution for us. We did it ourselves. Even when the revolution started, we did not know a single Soviet. When this revolution triumphed, we did not know a single Soviet. Our country has always acted independently. Our policy has always been to take advantage of every useful experience other revolutionary countries have had. But we cannot blame anybody for our mistakes. Our mistakes are ours just as Soviet mistakes are their own. Each revolutionary country has the right to make its own mistakes and to rectify those mistakes. We respect the criteria of every other revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist parties.

Thus, the Chinese did a lot of things for a number of years. One day they felt they had to implement new policies, make changes, that they had made mistakes. We observed those (?mistakes). That doesn't mean we are going to right away start doing what the Chinese used to do and what they did afterward. The same holds true for the Soviet Union. We did not have to make their mistakes. At the same time, when they decided to rectify those mistakes, we had no reason to mechanically copy everything the Soviets did.

[Shriver] What mistakes are you talking about?

[Castro] Well, the mistakes that Gorbachev is talking about.

[Shriver] He's opening up society.

[Castro] He says there was technological stagnation, too much bureaucracy; he said that at one time there was a personality cult.

[Shriver] He's allowed the people to criticize the government.

[Castro] We have not had this type of problem. We have not had this type of problem here.

[Shriver] But a lot of people say...

[Castro, interrupting] Those are Soviet problems, and the Soviets are trying to resolve their own problems and rectify their own mistakes. Soviet mistakes are different from our own. Soviet history is different from ours. The idiosyncracies of the Soviets are different from ours. Soviet institutions are different from ours, although we start out with the same principles. They rectify their mistakes and we rectify our own. We have been doing this for quite some time. I was talking to you about that today, the many things we are doing. We are very happy. I feel all revolutions have to rectify mistakes, especially socialist revolutions, because they are very new. They are very new. [repeats himself] They have made mistakes.

[Shriver] There's no glasnost here, then.

[Castro] Yes, there is glasnost here. There has always been. Always. There's no more self-critical party in the world than the PCC. There's none. Look at historical records. There's none. That's glasnost on a large scale.

[Shriver] But glasnost is open, open.

[Castro] Yes, it's the same thing. Opening, criticism, self-criticism. Yes, sir.

[Shriver] But an open society.

[Castro] We have always practiced... [changes thought] What's an open society? A society like that of the United States?

[Shriver] Is Cuba an open society?

[Castro] What?

[Shriver] Is Cuba an open society?

[Castro] Cuba is a revolutionary society, a united society. In certain aspects it is more open than Western societies. In many aspects. We make possible, turn into reality many of the people's aspirations that are not possible in Western countries. I was saying that what the Soviets do is apply Soviet formulas to Soviet problems, and what we Cubans do is apply Cuban formulas to Cuban problems. Do you want to know anything else about that?

[Shriver] Well, certainly you are aware that a lot of people think this is not an open society, that there's no freedom of the press, that there's no opposing political party, that people are not free to criticize the government.

[Castro] And do you think the Soviets are going to create opposition parties inside the Soviet Union? To think that is to delude yourself. Do you think...

[Shriver, interrupting] What about Cuba?

[Castro] Cuba is not planning to do it, really. But I don't think the Soviets are going to do it either. I have never heard Gorbachev talk about organizing new parties in the Soviet Union. I have never heard Gorbachev talk about partisan plurality. I have never heard Gorbachev talk about establishing a society similar to the United States in the Soviet Union. They are very different. You call American society an open society because you suffer from the mythomania that you have a so-called democratic system and think that the only democracy in the world is yours. We have a different system. But I don't

think there will be partisan plurality in the USSR. If, in order to call it an open society, you need to have partisan plurality, a mixed economy, etc., then I have never heard Gorbachev talk about it. That's an incorrect interpretation of Gorbachev's ideas. He wants to have a more democratic society. He wants the people to participate more in problems, decisionmaking. He wants the people to get more information. He wants...

[Shriver] What about more information for the Cuban people? What about being able to read opposing views?

[Castro] We simply don't have an opposition here. There's only a tiny number of people instigated by the U.S. Interest Section. That's not opposition. [chuckles] A few people instigated by the U.S. Interest Section.

[Shriver] But, Mr President, there are people who disagree, who are not instigated by the United States.

[Castro] You can ask our newspapers. Our newspapers are critical.

[Shriver] There's no opposition paper here.

[Castro] That's because there's no private ownership of the media. The opposition here is within the party and within the mass organizations. There are the newspapers of each one; and they are critical, increasingly critical. We want our newspapers to be increasingly critical. But it is criticism within the revolution, not criticism against the revolution.

[Shriver] Why?

[Castro] Simply because the people are the ones in power. We don't accept the idea of a counterrevolution. Counterrevolution is a concept of the U.S. Administration. We don't accept the idea of counterrevolution.

[Shriver] But why can't...

[Castro, interrupting] Our revolution can be made more perfect. We accept opposition within the revolution; we do not accept opposition against the revolution.

[Shriver] But Cubans are still Cubans and could disagree with the government. Why can they not offer an opposing view?

[Castro] Well, they can disagree with a lot of what the government is doing or what a government official is doing. But that doesn't mean they disagree with the revolution. We act on the premise that our people are revolutionary.

[Shriver] But what if they do disagree with the revolution and they're Cubans, why can't they stay here and voice their opinion?

[Castro] And be against the revolution? No one is forbidding them from leaving. No one is forbidding them from staying. No, no.

[Shriver] But they would like to stay; they're Cubans. They would like to work and stay in Cuba.

[Castro] And they want capitalism?

[Shriver] No, they want perhaps different changes in the society. They want a chance to be free to express themselves. They want a chance to get books here to study.

[Castro] What's freedom, what's freedom here in Cuba to you? To serve the interests of the United States?

[Shriver] What is liberty for you?

[Castro] What our people possess today: dignity, rights, independence, honor, principles, moral values, unity, solidarity, fraternity, true freedom. You're going to tell me that the millionaire and the beggar have the same freedom?

Those who have millions in the banks and the ones who sleep in doorways in New York? Where's the freedom of the blacks, the Chicanos, those who sleep in the street, the poor, the exploited in the United States? Where's the freedom?

[Shriver] They have the same freedoms in the United States. They have the same freedoms to voice their opinion, to criticize the administration.

[Castro] That's what the Constitution of the republic says, but there is a terrifying inequality. It is the inequality between the millionaire and the beggar, the rich and poor, the one who has a lot of money and the one who doesn't. Your society is the society of inequality. So, when there's no equality, there cannot be freedom. Where there's no equality, there cannot be democracy. That's the concept, the mythomania you suffer from in regard to Western and U.S. democracy.

[Shriver] But the millionaire and the beggar both have the same freedom to express their opinion, to criticize.

[Castro] I have never seen a beggar written up by the big television networks in the United States. I have never seen it.

[Shriver] Absolutely. There are reports about people who are homeless who voice criticism of the government.

[Castro] Listen, you are confusing freedom of the press with freedom to own the mass media. If the owners of your station, NBC, don't want it, you don't do the program. They look for someone else and they have you do the program. [sentence as heard]

[Shriver] But I am free on NBC.

[Castro] Yes, but the newspaper owners are the ones to decide who writes in the paper, and if they don't agree, they are fired. The owner of the paper, the station, has the right to allow or dismiss those who write for their paper. It's private property of the media. I believe the real right should be that the mass media belong to the entire people and not to the owners. That's a difference of opinion we have. They call freedom the freedom to own the media. But the director decides what gets published. If the director wants, you do this program. If the director doesn't, you don't. That's the truth. If the director wants you to, you have a program. If the director doesn't want you to, you don't have a program. Many poor people, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos don't have a program. If you don't own your program, you work there as long as the company allows you to. Yet you call that freedom.

[Shriver] I want to talk to you about something different than freedom of the press, because it's a different subject. On the record of human rights in Cuba, the State Department has said it has seen indications that things are changing here but there is still a lot more that needs to be done. You now tolerate some human rights organizations here in Cuba, but they want to be legalized. Why don't you legalize them?

[Castro] There is a small group of counterrevolutionaries, former counterrevolutionaries here who are manipulated by the U.S. Interest Section. There is no human rights organization here but an organization of liars and slanderers. That is what there is here. It will never become legal. That is illusory. It is a group of slanderers at the service of the U.S. Interest Section. That is what there is here. There have been no changes here. We thank the State Department very much for stating that there have been changes, but there have been no such changes here.

[Shriver] There have been no changes in regards to human rights?

[Castro] There is absolute respect for the human rights of citizens. I believe that no country in the world [words indistinct] with your idea of human rights. But there is no single country in which human rights are respected more carefully. There is no country in the world, there is no revolution in the world that has been more observant of human rights than our country.

[Shriver] But, Mr President...

[Castro, interrupting] This campaign alleging abuses and violence—they are lies. The publicity machinery of the United States and the West has echoed them. They are shameful slanders. Talk to the people, talk to the people. [repeats himself] All those people you saw today, talk to them and ask them if they have ever suffered needs, if there has ever been violence against a prisoner, if there has even been torture here. When torture is mentioned here, our people are being insulted. Our people would not tolerate anything like that because the people are educated, cultivated, revolutionary. That is a shameful slander.

[Shriver] Mr President, there are people who have spent time in your jails who have talked about it, who also say they have been tortured, that they have been beaten.

[Castro] That have been what? [Interpreter says: "Tortured"] Ask the people. Because the best witnesses are the millions of citizens of this country. Ask a worker, ask a peasant, ask a university student, ask intellectuals if there has ever been an assassination, a missing person, a tortured person in this country. That is a lie. If you want to believe them, [words indistinct] but that is a big lie. Lies do not turn into truths by simply repeating them. That is a fascist principle, [words indistinct] that the U.S. propaganda is using by repeating, repeating, and repeating wicked lies. The people are our best witnesses. To speak of torture in this country is to insult the people of Cuba because our people would not tolerate it.

[Shriver] So, the people that spent time, the political prisoners, [words indistinct] they lie about it?

[Castro] Yes.

[Shriver] They all lie.

[Castro] Not all of them, there are only a few, there are only a few. [repeats himself] There are a few who have been echoed by the Western propaganda. There were thousands of prisoners here, and with reason. [Words indistinct] very serious crimes, those who landed in Giron, some 1,300. They came to invade a country at the service of a foreign power. What could we do, sit idly by? What would you have done if 10,000 Americans at the service of Cuba invaded the United States? Would you have called them patriots, freedom fighters? How many years in jail would you have sentenced them? For example, a hijacker is sentenced to 40 years. The two Cubans who hijacked a plane—in order to help end disorder we sent two Cubans back to the United States so they could be tried. They were sentenced to 40 years. They have not allowed the family to visit them a single time. You call someone a terrorist and sentence him to 40 years. If someone (?builds a bomb) or conducts terrorist actions, acts of sabotage, is a spy at the service of the United States, we cannot punish them? Why do you punish those who you consider a traitor, spy, enemy of the United States? Why can't you understand that we punish here those who have been traitors, spies, saboteurs, terrorists, plane hijackers? Why does the law have to be one way there and a different way here? Why is the ETA [Basque Fatherland and Liberty], which struggles against the state, punished in Spain? Why are the Red Brigades and those who fight against the state punished in Germany, France, Italy? Why does England sanction the Irish who fight against the British domination? You in the West can sanction and we, a Third World country, a

revolutionary country, cannot sanction. Why is that? Why is it in your case a terrorist is a terrible thing, but when terrorism is carried out against a revolutionary country they are considered a patriot, freedom fighters? Where is the logic of that?

[Shriver] Mr President, are people who criticize the government, who write things against the government, are they counterrevolutionaries? Should they go to prison?

[Castro] I speak against the government, many people criticize the government.

[Shriver] Yes, but you are the head of the government.

[Castro] No one here has ever been arrested for criticizing the revolution. That is a lie. That is simply a lie. Criticism against the government is not the same thing as activities against the revolution, sabotage of the economy or sabotage of agriculture. You cannot forget that we have had against us the most powerful country in the world encouraging the counterrevolution here. Why should we have to guarantee impunity at the service of a policy that attacks our country?

[Shriver] But these are not United States' inspired people. These are regular Cubans who went to prison for being in opposition to the government.

[Castro] Where are they?

[Shriver] In prisons, some of them. Some have gotten out.

[Castro] That is a lie. Find them. Find the ones who are in prison. It is a lie that they are in prison for having an opinion, a view. The people who are in prison are there because of their activities and counterrevolutionary crimes, not for having opinions or critical views, because our people are characterized as having a truly critical spirit. One of the people who expresses themselves most openly and critically are the Cuban people. So all that is a lie. It is myth made up by reactionary propaganda, U.S. propaganda against Cuba. That is what it is. I simply do not accept that.

I would say that one of the most vicious slanders of this whole myth that has been made up, of this deceitful propaganda against Cuba, which attacks us, is that we [words indistinct]. No other government has done more for its people than Cuba. No other government has made greater contributions to the human rights of a citizen than what our country has done. Only by reducing the rate from 60 to approximately 13.2 children who died every year per 1,000 births in our country, we have saved the lives of over 300,000 children. Life expectancy was 55 years. It is now almost 75 years in our country. Our country was an illiterate country. Now there isn't a single child without schooling, an adolescent without schooling, or a citizen without medical care. There isn't a single individual who doesn't have the same opportunities to study and develop as everyone else. We have not only helped our people. Over 2,000 Cuban health workers are providing their services in 30 countries around the world. We have 24,000 students with scholarships from over 80 Third World countries. So, we have not only worked for us. This is a country where you do not have beggars, barefoot children, or abandoned and deserted people. This is a country where you do not find any gambling, prostitution, or drugs.

When Western countries free their societies from all those aberrations and all those things, when they do away with exploiting women, when they do away with racial and women's discrimination, when they do away with that, let them then speak about human rights. The police or public authorities in Cuba have never broken up a demonstration. What you see everyday in the United States, England, Spain, France, Italy, and the FRG is repression of workers who are on strike, pacifists, and people who go on demonstrations. There is not a single time in almost 30 years that teargas has been used against the people. Not a single time in 30 years have we fired a shot, hit anyone, fired a rubber bullet. And we see that everyday in France, Italy, England, the FRG, and the United States. When you put an end to teargassing, beatings, dogs, water-hoses, and when you put an end to all that repression, then speak about human rights.

In Cuba that has never happened. Not even once. I believe that we respect human rights much more than the so-called democratic societies. When you stop looting the Third World by selling more and more at a high price and buying at a cheaper prices, when you stop 120,000 children from dying of hunger and lack of medication in the Third World—120,000 every 3 days—then let the Western countries talk about human rights. Because now, I believe they do not have any moral right to talk about human rights.

[Shriver] You have let individuals from different human rights organizations into your prisons. If the International Red Cross, which is the internationally recognized organization which monitors human rights conditions, would like to come and see the prisons, would you let them in?

[Castro] We would have no objection. We would have no objection to opening our doors and letting them come and see our prisons.

[Shriver] The International Red Cross?

[Castro] We really would have no objection. What we would not do is do it under pressure. We would not do it on anyone's demand. But we have nothing to hide. And we would have no objections to show our prisons to those who come here in good faith. Many Americans have come, several organizations have come, and we have shown them our prisons. We have shown them everything we have to show because we have nothing to

hide. There is a category of prisoners here called plantados. In what country of the world do those prisoners exist? Only in Cuba. These plantados do not exist in the United States. When a prisoner in the United States does not want to get dressed, he has to get dressed. In France, the FRG, Italy, Spain, the United States, all around the world, when someone does not want to put on the uniform, they put the uniform on him. We have never even done that. The mere existence of the so-called plantados is the most [words indistinct] of that whole campaign against Cuba. Only in a country where a not a single finger has been laid on a prisoner can this plantados category exist.

[Shriver] But it is good news to know that you will allow the International Red Cross to come in and [words indistinct].

[Castro] We have no objections because we have nothing to hide. What we do not accept is anyone assuming the right to inspect us. It's not the same thing for us to be willing to open our prisons to show what we have here. They will see that the most humane penitentiary system in the world is this one. They will see, they will be able to confirm this. In this country prisoners are trained, they are paid for their work. This is done with common prisoners, general prisoners, common prisoners. In this country we help the prisoners' relatives. What other country has ever done this? We have done this since the beginning of the revolution. We helped the children of the bandits who were up in arms in the mountains at the service of the United States.

[Shriver] Speaking of plantados, do you plan to release all of them?

[Castro] We have released almost all of them already. There may be a few dozen left.

[Shriver] But how about all?

[Castro] Well, there is no reason for us to have to release them all. Some are more dangerous than others. We do not want to release people who will later go to El Salvador and kill a bishop. We do not want to release people who will later go and destroy a plane in flight. We do not want to release people who would go and kill Nicaraguans. We do not have to release them. We have released most of them. There are some dozens left. The overwhelming majority has been released because of efforts made by the U.S. Catholic Church, because of humanitarian efforts made by various organizations. We did it not because we had to, not because we had to. [repeats himself] I believe that when the United States ceases its hostility against Cuba, when the United States stops conspiring against Cuba, then it will be very easy for us to say that we are going to release all those who remain in prison.

Do not forget, you think the United States is a friend of ours, that there are normal relations between the United States and Cuba. But there is hostility, a constant campaign encouraging the subversion. The United States encourages sabotage, subversion, counterrevolutionary activities through many radio stations. We will never disarm ourselves. We will never disarm ourselves, nor will we sit idly by. We will always be in a position to defend the revolution at the necessary price. We will do it as part of our principles, as we have always done.

Imagine! You have turned a Batista policeman, a terrorist like Valladares, a terrorist who was arrested with a bag of dynamite supplied to him by the U.S. Embassy, you have made him the head of the U.S. delegation to the UN Human Rights Commission. Never in history had such a shameless thing been seen. Never had such a crazy thing ever been seen. The United States, the country that speaks of democracy and human rights, has placed a Batista policeman at the head of its delegation in Geneva. We have all the evidence. A terrorist has been appointed head of the delegation. Can a country that does this be serious?

[Shriver] Do you think the United States will be successful in pressuring other countries to sponsor the movement to look into human rights in Cuba?

[Castro] The United States had never applied such monstrous pressure on other countries. We know this because the countries themselves tell us.

[Shriver] Do you think they will...

[Castro, interrupting] Let me explain! I can't give you a definite answer because I am not a fortune-teller. I say that the United States is using all its influence, using all its resources to pressure, not its NATO allies—NATO allies behave like a mafia in regard to this slanderous U.S. policy—but to place enormous pressure on Latin American countries and other Third World countries—economic, political, and all kinds of pressures. It is telling them they have to vote in a certain way. The power of the United States will be tested. I know there are many countries that are irritated, angry, and humiliated.

Shultz and the U.S. State Department have become aware of their own stupidity. They know they have appointed a terrorist and a Batista policeman as the head of the commission. Shultz sent a letter—we have it here—to numerous U.S. embassies explaining that Valladares is not a policeman, that it is false, that Valladares was never convicted for terrorism. Fifteen lies; they are here. The State Department has said 15 lies aboutValladares.

[Shriver] Mr President, let's not argue about politics, let's not argue about politics. [repeats herself] [passage indistinct]

[Castro] This document is a letter from Shultz. What does he try to prove? That it is a lie that Valladares was a Batista policeman.

[Shriver] Let's not argue about that. Let me ask you something constructive. When will the International Red Cross be allowed to come?

[Castro] I told you we had no objections. But that does not mean we are going to ...

[Shriver, interrupting] Could they come next week?

[Castro] This is a declaration of principle. I am not going to make a commitment that we are going to receive them as a result of this interview. We do not handle things like that. We do not make decisions during a news interview. In a news interview we can make a declaration of principle. We will not allow ourselves to be inspected by anybody. But we have no objection to showing our prisons to all people of good faith, and, if necessary, to the Red Cross. What I cannot do is let the news that, for instance, we'll make the decision the day after tomorrow, come out in a press interview. I'm very sorry, but I can't give you an answer.

[Shriver] You won't give them a time?

[Castro] I have already made a declaration of principle. To me that's enough.

[Shriver] OK. Let me move along to the Olympics. You've chosen not to attend the Olympics in Seoul. Do you regret that decision?

[Castro] No, not at all. It's a question of principles. Olympic games in Seoul are like an Olympics at the Guantanamo Naval Base occupied by the United States. If the socialist countries did not go to Los Angeles because of security considerations, I ask myself if there's more security in Seoul than in Los Angeles. I don't think so. We did not go to Los Angeles out of solidarity with the socialist countries. We are not planning to go to Seoul, first of all, because of principles. We believe that manipulated games do not contribute to peace nor do they contribute to the unity of the Korean people. We favored the cohosting of the Olympics. We could then have all honorably attended the Olympics. We have worked a great deal in that direction. We worked with North Korea. We worked with the Olympics Committee to find a solution to the problem so that the two Koreas could get together and share the Olympics as a single nation, and so we could all work for the success of the Olympics. We made a big effort in that direction, but it did not bring results. A few ridiculous events were offered to the DPRK. We had hopes for a democratic opening, following the huge demonstrations and the big police repression of the workers, the students, the people. We had hopes for a democratic opening. This democratic opening did not occur. It did not occur, nor was there cohosting. For us, it is not the honorable thing to do to attend these Olympics. We simply said we would not register and we would not attend. That was the decision we made.

[Shriver] And there's nothing that would make you reconsider, the fact that the Soviets are going and other communist countries are going?

[Castro] We are an independent country. We are very mindful of our independence and very proud of our independence. If the socialist countries feel they should go to the Olympics—all this I discussed with the socialist countries. They know my opinion, they know my views. I brought up this matter at the meeting of party secretaries. They know what I think. It is no surprise to them. If they think they should go, I respect their view. However, Cuba does not think it is honorable to go. I believe it would be lacking in solidarity with the people of the DPRK. We do not exchange principles for a few gold medals.

So, if the socialist countries did not go to Los Angeles because of security considerations, I wonder if there's more security in Seoul than in Los Angeles. I see a contradiction in that, but I respect the decision made. We are a sovereign, independent country with its own view. We were, we are, and we will always be. Those who think we had to go to Seoul because the USSR and other socialist countries decided to go to Seoul are deluding themselves. Those who think that way have no idea of a country's dignity and sovereignty.

[Shriver] Do you worry that the decision might cost you the Pan-American Games here?

[Castro] It would be a great injustice if something like that happened. We have not violated any Olympic regulation. We have simply not registered, and no one has ever been sanctioned. Our first rights were taken away from us once. They were given to Indianapolis. Yet the United States had boycotted the Moscow Olympics. If the United States boycotted the Moscow Olympics, how could there be an Olympics in Los Angeles? If it boycotted Moscow, why were there Pan-American Games in Indianapolis? They could take the games away from us, but it would be a tremendous injustice and would greatly harm Latin American sports. But we don't care. We really don't care. No one is going to pressure us and make us bow our heads by threatening us with taking away the Pan-American Games. No country in this hemisphere has done more for sports than Cuba. No country has developed sports so much. No Latin American country. We won more medals at the Olympics—or rather, the Pan-American Games—than all the other Latin American countries together. Doesn't a country that has done this much for sports deserve to host Pan-American Games? We believe so. They can take them away, but we are not worried.

[Shriver] On the record, there is nothing that would make you reconsider your decision?

[Castro] Samaranch wrote me. He said he would keep working hard to find a solution. We are happy about that. If he finds a solution satisfactory to the DPRK, then we will support him and we would participate. But I don't see many chances of that. So many efforts have been made to find a solution with no results that I don't know if at this point a formula is possible. Anyway, Samaranch is keeping at it, and I think this is positive. If he is successful, we'll be glad. We would go in that case, but that is not very probable.

[Shriver] If he took away the pretense that North Korea was cohosting the games, [as heard] then you would go?

[Castro] Yes, we would go. Of course. I hope such a solution is found. That is what we wanted, and that is what we have been endeavoring to do.

[Shriver] You are aware of this, but I'll ask you. Pat Robertson, who is running for president of the United States, has said there are Soviet missiles in Cuba. If he were sitting here, what would you say to him?

[Castro] To whom, Pat Robertson? I don't think he would say it if he were sitting here. No one can. He may say that lie there, during a political debate. But in front of me, a man who respects himself will not say that. Then, I would tell him to go to the doctor. If he comes here and tells me we have intermediate-range missiles, nuclear missiles in Cuba—we have neither nuclear nor conventional—I would suggest he see a doctor, a psychiatrist. I don't know, this is madness. As I told a journalist of USA TODAY, this was a Walt Disney fantasy. You are told just about anything, and at times you believe them. I am amazed at the things you believe. It is incredible how the country which has the most numerous mass media is the worst informed country of the world.

[Shriver] Might you, in the context of a U.S.-Soviet arms agreement, allow the United States to inspect the bases here?

[Castro] What bases?

[Shriver] To come here to inspect to make sure that there are no missiles here?

[Castro] No. If the United States allows us to inspect them, we would allow the United States to inspect us. But the unilateral right of the United States to inspect Cuba—that's absolutely impossible.

[Shriver] We know a lot about what the United States would like for Cuba to do to improve relations with Havana. But what would Cuba like the United States to do?

[Castro] You have asked me a very difficult question. I would have to become Reagan's adviser, or adviser, perhaps, of some future U.S. president. Well, if you like, I will advise him. I am willing to advise him. You let me think, and I will not charge him anything to tell him about not only what the United States should do to improve relations with Cuba but with Latin America and the Third World.

[Shriver] Now, Cuba in particular.

[Castro] I would tell them to accept the existence of an independent and sovereign country, to accept the existence of a socialist country. I would tell them to forget any ideas about imposing conditions on us. Along that path, relations between the United States and Cuba will never improve.

[Shriver] You will never change anything in order to achieve relations with the United States?

[Castro] Change what, for instance?

[Shriver] Your dependency, your relationship with the Soviet Union.

[Castro] We will not sacrifice our relations with the Soviet Union under any conditions. First of all, it would be ungratefulness, opportunism, and stupidity. Never will the relations between the United States and Cuba have the same characteristics as the relations between the USSR and Cuba. These are relations based on principles and solidarity. We can never expect from a capitalist country that type of relationship with us. Therefore, we will not do it. We would be ungrateful and stupid. Who was it in the French Revolution? I think that a counterrevolutionary leader had been murdered. Someone, I think it was Talleyrand, said: More than a crime, it is stupid. Therefore, for us to sacrifice our relations with our Soviet friends in order to improve our relations with our enemies, the United States, more than a crime, it would be stupid.

[Shriver] So, you'll never stop seeing the United States as an enemy.

[Castro] No, no. It is the United States that sees us as an enemy. We have not set ourselves up as an enemy of the United States. But the United States has set itself up as our enemy. Not the people of the United States, but the Government of the United States.

[Shriver] Yet you talk about the United States as your enemy. Is there anything that can be done to change that relationship?

[Castro] Well, I can say that it's the government that has set itself up as our enemy. I am not confusing the government with the people of the United States.

[Shriver] Is there anything that can change the relationship between the U.S. Government and Cuba so the two countries would no longer be enemies?

[Castro] I think it would be necessary for both sides to want to improve relations. For our part, we are willing to do it. Now, we would have to ask the present U.S. Government whether it is willing. Some steps have been taken. You can't say that no steps have been taken. You know, this administration is very contradictory. A step was taken once—the U.S. Interest Section. It was set up during the Carter administration. Unfortunately, this was accompanied by intensive CIA espionage. In this instance, we acted more wisely. We totally forbade all espionage activity from our interest office in Washington. We never did it, not once. Yet, when the U.S. Interest Section opened here, it engaged in espionage from the very 1st day. We did as the fisherman does. We gave them plenty of reel for years. We collected all the evidence. We collected all the evidence. [repeats himself] When we had all the evidence, we had no choice. We warned them two or three times. You are spying. We warned them two or three times. In the end, we had no choice but to present all the evidence. Of course, the United States is a country with press freedom. Yet I can't figure out why not a single word of Cuba's charges was printed. Cuba had all the evidence. One of the biggest scandals in the history of espionage occurred less than half a year ago. There was all sorts of evidence, but not a single word was published in the United States. What do you think? It's the country where press freedom reigns.

There are also some very paradoxical things, not just concerning press freedom. We were talking about human rights just a while ago. The United States talks about human rights. And yet it does not allow a single medication to come to Cuba. If medication from the United States can save a life, that medication cannot come to Cuba. If it can cure a cancer, the person will not be cured. If it can ease someone's pain, that pain will not be eased. That country, which so defends human rights, forbids the import of medical equipment and medication in this country. Tell me if that gives the United States any moral right (?to talk) about human rights.

[Shriver] That's because of the trade embargo.

[Castro] The embargo. Can a country that does that speak of human rights and can it make demands of a small country which it is blockading and refusing technology and medication? Can it speak of human rights? Come on.

[Shriver] Let me switch gears a moment. Back in the early sixties there were reports about many assassination plots against you. Who do you hold responsible for those?

[Castro] You've asked a difficult question. I believe Kennedy had bad advisers. Someone advised him badly. That's my opinion. Or perhaps people who interpreted some remark by Kennedy. I don't know if Kennedy might have said once: We have to get rid of Castro. Perhaps Kennedy said it in political terms. We have to get rid of Castro politically. But maybe some people thought that meant getting rid of Castro physically. Those were the first reports we heard. However, the assassination attempts began before the Kennedy administration. The CIA started the dirty war in the Eisenhower years. Kennedy did not start the dirty war against Cuba. Eisenhower, the CIA, the Pentagon started it a long time before Kennedy took office. The assassination plans began before Kennedy came to office. What has been historically proved is that there were plans to physically eliminate Cuban leaders, myself included, during the Kennedy administration. That was confirmed. What hasn't been confirmed is that Kennedy gave the order. What hasn't been confirmed is that Kennedy had that intention. The talk is about interpretations of things (?that are not certain). I want to tell you...

[Shriver, interrupting] What do you think?

[Castro] I find it difficult to believe that Kennedy might have assumed that responsibility. It doesn't fit the image I have of him, his character. It doesn't fit. I feel there might be a problem of interpretation and there might have been actions taken by people who wanted to resolve the problem along those lines. Anyway, we must consider the following, as I was telling you this afternoon: Kennedy inherited the Giron invasion. It was not his idea. He did not organize it. After the Bay of Pigs he was very angry. In a way, he felt humiliated. We were not to blame for that. What we did was defend ourselves. So all this anger might have created an atmosphere conducive to plans of this nature.

Independently of what might have happened, it does not change my opinion of Kennedy. I have a positive opinion of Kennedy. He was an intelligent, truly brilliant man. After Roosevelt, he was the only president of the United States who had a Latin American policy: the Alliance for Progress. It was an intelligent policy seeking to check the spread of the Cuban revolution. The trauma produced by the Cuban revolution, the fact that a revolution had taken place so close to the United States, awakened the fear that there might be objective conditions for revolution in Latin America. Kennedy did not conceive a repressive strategy. Instead, he came up with a strategy of social reform to check revolution in Latin America. He spoke of agrarian reform, fiscal reform, education and health programs—many of the things that we have done. He offered economic aid—$20 billion. Latin America did not owe a single cent then. The problems of Latin America are bigger now. It has double the population, a $400-billion debt. It is a volcano where problems are accumulating. There's no policy for Latin America. Kennedy was the last president to have a policy for Latin America.

I do not have a bad personal opinion of Kennedy. I am not telling you this because you are a relative. If you have read other interviews, my statements, you will see that I have always spoken of Kennedy with respect. As I was telling you this afternoon, I must acknowledge that he did not commit the worst of mistakes. That would have been sending the Marines to Cuba. That is, I must acknowledge that he acted calmly, serenely, and that he did not make that big mistake. He might have erred in not stopping the invasion, because he did not yet have enough authority, enough experience. He did not stop it. That could have been his mistake, but he avoided a much bigger mistake. He could have sent the Marines in.

[Shriver] There are theories that have existed for years that you knew about the assassination plots in the early sixties, that you held President Kennedy responsible, and that you, in turn, were involved in his assassination. Did you have anything to do with it?

[Castro] I believe... [changes thought] I can't answer that question because I can't accept such an accusation or doubt. Therefore, I will not stoop to deny it. What I can tell you is the following: News reached us daily of CIA assassination plans before and after Kennedy. I can even tell you the following: First, to plan an action against the president of the United States was an irresponsible, insane action. I believe it would be farfetched to think that a responsible leader, a revolutionary who is aware of his responsibilities, would come up with such madness, because this would be political madness. It's not just a question with ethical, moral implications. It's a question with serious political implications. A leader of a small country who would plan the elimination of the president of the United States would be acting irresponsibly. It can never be said that the leaders of the Cuban revolution have acted irresponsibly. They are firm, brave, determined, but never irresponsible. I can tell you that.

Second, the day Kennedy was assassinated, I was meeting with a Kennedy envoy. He was a French journalist, (Jean Daniel), who had spoken at length with Kennedy. That was months after the October crisis. Kennedy was still feeling the trauma of the grave danger experienced in those day. So, Kennedy wanted to get in touch with me. He sent me a message with this journalist. He told me he had a message from Kennedy. That same evening I took him with me to Varadero, so we could talk at our leisure there.

We were talking. He was telling me all about Kennedy's conversation, when we heard the news of Kennedy's assassination on the radio. What I can tell you is that I felt very bad. Kennedy's death hurt. I saw in Kennedy an intelligent, capable adversary. I felt an emptiness the day Kennedy was killed. I was really hurt. I must tell you in all honesty. It seemed to me that it was a death with no dignity, an unfair death. Time passed and strange, odd things occurred. Oswald's murder. Oswald in jail, Oswald killed. I later read a book—I think it was Sorensen's—about the death of the president. It was Sorensen, wasn't it? Yes. A long book. I read a thousand pages, because I wanted an explanation.

Now, when Oswald's name came up, someone reported that an individual with the same name had tried to visit Cuba and had asked for a visa at the Mexican Embassy. It was a routine request. I never knew anything about it. The Foreign Ministry was informed. We were denying all those visas because we were mistrustful. Here's an American wanting to come to our country. What is he coming for? Why is he coming? Unless it was someone well known, we were not granting visas. So this individual went there. He asked for a visa but he was denied a visa. No one thought about it again. But then the name started to appear. On top of it, this man was married to a Soviet woman. So, imagine! What if this man had come to Cuba on a routine visit and then had gone back to the United States and assassinated Kennedy? They would have tried to implicate us. I sometimes ask myself if someone, diabolically, did not plan all this, someone half mad, someone mentally ill. He might have been manipulated. No one can tell, no one can tell if it was an individual reaction. It seems that he was the one who shot him. It seems. It might have been the act of an individual. However, there are people like this who can be manipulated. There are people who act on their own. This young man who tried to assassinate Reagan apparently acted alone. It was said that he was in love with an actress, that it was a case of unrequited love. He wanted to be famous. He almost killed Reagan. This kind of madman can exist anywhere.

Now, the most probable thing is that if we had heard that someone was planning to assassinate Kennedy, we would have alerted the U.S. Government. We would have warned them about the danger. That's the most probable thing. It did not happen that way because we never heard about it. But I don't want to talk about our conduct in that respect, how we interpret our obligations. If we hear that someone is trying to assassinate Reagan, you can rest assured that we will alert Reagan. You can be assured that we will alert Reagan, because I feel a responsible government cannot hear of such a report, learn of such a report and not warn somebody. You can rest assured. And I believe the U.S. Government knows it. I think there cannot be any sane, serious person in the United States who can believe that Cuba had anything to do with Kennedy's death.

Not even Batista. We were the enemies of Batista. We could have killed Batista. However, we are politically against tyrannicide; we never practiced tyrannicide. We never believed that the death of a man would change a society. Therefore, we had the strength to attack the Moncada Barracks with 160 men, to wage war. We could have ambushed Batista and killed him. There's not a single indication in the entire history of the revolution that the 26 July Movement, which we organized and led,

had planned to assassinate Batista. And yet Batista had killed thousands of our comrades. Therefore, in philosophical terms, we have never contemplated tyrannicide. Never. If we did not do it with Batista here—it would have been easy—why do it with a president of the United States. Men have their ideas, convictions, history. That cannot be ignored.

[Shriver] Let me ask you one or two final questions. Your good friend, the novelist Garcia, or rather I should say, your good friend, the writer Garcia Marquez, says you are an example of the solitude of power.

[Castro] Those are the theories of Garcia Marquez. Those are his theories, and I respect them. He even wrote a prologue for the book of an Italian journalist based on an interview with me, in which he elaborated on this theory. He says I feel the solitude of power. He says he feels the solitude of power.

[Shriver] Do you?

[Castro] I don't feel it. I don't feel it because I don't feel I am in power. I feel I am among the people You were able to come along with me to various places today. I have a lot of contact with the people. I talk to thousands of people every month. Thus, I cannot feel solitude in any way.

I might experience some of the stress of power, the sacrifices power entails. I might feel the torture. You who speak of human rights, look how many lights you have in here. It's tremendously warm. Lights everywhere. They say that practitioners of torture do this kind of thing. They set up unbearable lights. I must make some of these sacrifices. But that's Garcia Marquez' theory. I respect it, but I do not share it. I have a lot of contact with the people and Garcia Marquez knows it, although he has never made a tour with me as you did.

[Shriver] You visit these people, but when you finish visiting them you're alone.

[Castro] I have many things to do when I finish. But I am keeping these to myself. They are private. But I'm never alone. I don't know what the solitude of power means.

[Shriver] Do you know what solitude means? Power isn't lonely?

[Castro] I told Garcia Marquez one day—he asked me, what would you like to do now? I told him, I want to sit on the Malecon [seaside drive] or stand on a corner. That's true. He wrote this in his prologue. You see, sometimes you feel like doing the same things other people do. Normal, simple things: to sit on the Malecon and (?look out to sea)—something I can't do. But I have been resigned to this lifestyle for a long time. It doesn't prevent me from having... [changes thought] I know a lot of people, wonderful people. There are millions of excellent people among the population. I feel happy in contact with all those people. You were able to see it. We went to places where my visit had not been announced. I have a lot of contact with the people. I have the privilege of knowing a lot of good people, people whom I love and people whom I admire. I not only love our people; I admire our people. Our people possess great virtues, great qualities; they are noble, generous, solidary, internationalist. I told you what they did. When they asked for teachers for Nicaragua, 30,000 volunteered. When the counterrevolution killed some teachers, 100,000 volunteered. All teachers. Our people really possess great qualities.

You were asking me if aid to Angola was costly. This is not so. We have the people. We don't have the money, but we have the people to do things. We pay the wages of the people in Angola. That is, we do not spend foreign currency, which is what we are most short of. It has been said, and it is a lie, that we are paid to have our troops there. I believe that a drop of the blood of an internationalist combatant—either soldiers or civilians—is not worth all the gold in the world. We can do it because we have a great, wonderful people. They have been forged in the revolution. I am proud of the qualities of our people.

[Shriver] And no loneliness in power.

[Castro] No loneliness in power.

[Shriver] Let me ask you one or two more questions.

[Castro] Ask anything you want. We can spend two or three more rolls of film. Don't leave anything unasked.

[Shriver] We were looking at the museum today, the Revolution Museum, and there was part of a U-2 plane. There is a theory that there was a second U-2 shot down during the Cuban missile crisis, and that the Cubans shot it down.

[Castro] There was only one plane shot down during the last days of the crisis. We did not shoot down the plane. We maintained that we should not allow low altitude flights. We warned the Soviets and everybody else that we would not allow low altitude flights, and that we would fire. We mobilized all our antiaircraft artillery. That morning, when the planes were sighted flying low, our antiaircraft batteries opened fire everywhere against these planes. That was in the morning. But we did not have missiles. In view of this situation, a Soviet missile battery opened fire and shot the plane down. What caused this? The fact that they really [words indistinct]. We opened fire in the morning. If they want to blame us, we accept. We gave orders to our antiaircraft batteries to open fire on all low flying planes. But we did not have surface-to-air long-range missiles. Those were in the hands of the Soviets. It was a Soviet officer who fired.

[Shriver] There was no second plane shot?

[Castro] There was no second plane, but if any others had flown low, there might have been a lot of planes downed. We did order our antiaircraft batteries to open fire. But it wasn't that plane. They opened fire and the planes quickly retreated. However, Cuba did not give the order to fire the missile because it was not under our control. If it had been under our control, we would have given the order to shoot. So, we are not avoiding responsibility. What we cannot claim is the historical credit of downing the plane. We cannot usurp that credit away.

[Shriver] Did you feel betrayed by Khruschev in the Cuban missile crisis?

[Castro] No, we did not feel betrayed, but I was very angry, very displeased, because we believe what he did was completely wrong.

There were two errors. One was to speak about the missiles in Turkey. It was absolutely incorrect to exchange the missiles in Cuba for those in Turkey. That was immoral and unacceptable.

Second, it was incorrect to decide to withdraw the missiles without discussing it first with us. I understand this was a big situation; that it was tense, dangerous, but the idea that the missiles be withdrawn without consulting Cuba was not acceptable. We would not have opposed this, but we would have demanded conditions. And I think he could have said that he was willing to withdraw the missiles if guarantees were given that were acceptable to Cuba. Then we could have discussed this.

But this was not done. The Guantanamo Base remained. The acts of piracy, the dirty war, the subversive plans—all this continued. So we were justifiably irritated and in disagreement. We did not allow our bases to be inspected. We said that no one could inspect us here. The Soviets agreed with the Americans. They inspected the ships. But we did not accept the inspection of our territory as a matter of principle.

[Shriver] If Khruschev angered you, did he humiliate you?

[Castro] No, to tell the truth, Khruschev was a good friend of ours. Khruschev was the one who initiated political and economic relations with Cuba. He was extraordinarily generous and friendly with our country. I would say that everything he did was good for our country.

The only point on which we totally disagreed was the manner in which he handled the crisis at the end, ignoring Cuba. It was done in a strange manner. Speaking of missiles in Turkey, talking about withdrawing missiles in Cuba without consulting us. He had to consult us because we had agreements that were signed by the two countries. He not only had a political obligation but also a legal responsibility to consult us, but he did not.

[Shriver] You have expressed concerns about the Cuban economy. The question is how can you continue to provide all of these inclusive services in education, health? Can you afford it? Can you continue to offer them?

[Castro] We can continue offering and increasing them. We are increasing them. We have 3,000 new doctors each year, 2,000 of them as family doctors. We have built 2,000 family doctor homes-offices. Our educational program continues. Our sports and housing programs continue.

[Shriver] At what cost?

[Castro] With our work, at the cost of our enthusiasm and our effort.

[Shriver] And with the help of the Soviets?

[Castro] Without sacrificing our development.

We have achieved good trade relations. You call this a subsidy. It is simply a matter of just relations between developed and developing countries. We have with the Soviet Union and socialist countries the type of relations that in my opinion developed countries should have with Third World countries. The secret lies in that we administer those resources. The resources are not misappropriated. They are not stolen. They do not flee the country. They are invested in all these things.

In addition to this, there is economic investment, very important economic investments. There are also very important agricultural investments in addition to investments in education, health, sports, and recreation. We simply administer and distribute our resources well. That's why we have enough.

[Shriver] The system you have set up allows for a tremendous amount of things for a tremendous amount of people, but some criticize that you are not allowing for individualism or self-fulfillment. Why can't you open up the system for that as well?

[Castro] What is the individual development that is not allowed? What is it?

[Shriver] People who...

[Castro, interrupting] Private business? A private enterprise? No, we will not permit it. We have gotten this far precisely because we have turned property into the property of all the people. We have achieved so much enthusiasm among the people because the people know they work for themselves. If the people were working for someone else, they would not do what they are doing.

What you saw in the street, what you saw in the street [repeats himself] cannot happen in capitalism. What resident will voluntarily work with an enterprise that has a contract and is doing construction work? You cannot see this cooperation involving all the people in capitalism.

[Shriver] So individualism...

[Castro, interrupting] That is why we have no private property; only personal property, the house, car, whatever the people want for their personal use. But we cannot accept private ownership of the means of production. It is collective ownership.

[Shriver] The concept of individualism outside the system—it does not exist?

[Castro] I think we should promote the development of individual abilities. I do not think that social spirit, cooperation, and generosity, as well as the highest development of an individual's abilities, his physical and intellectual skills, are irreconcilable. We promote this, not individual egoism. We promote the fullest development of the personality.

Did you see those children there? Those children are going to be people very superior to this generation's. Our young people are excellent, much better than the old generation. I think that each new generation will be more intellectually developed and will have a more developed personality at the service of society. That is very difficult to understand for people who live in a capitalist system. It is very difficult if they live in a society that is characterized by its individualism. Individuality is not the same as individualism. We do not cultivate individualism but the individual, his abilities, the development of his intelligence, his moral and intellectual qualities. But we do not cultivate individualism. We have more of a sense of family and unity, of solidarity.

The French Revolution spoke about three great things: liberty, equality, and fraternity. But it was never able to put equality into practice. It was never able to promote the idea of fraternity.

The socialist revolution complements the bourgeois liberal revolution's idea of liberty because next to the idea of liberty, it promotes the concept of equality and fraternity among people. The socialist revolution has gone beyond the values of the capitalist society. Capitalist society was a great advancement in view of slavery, in view of feudalism. Feudalism was a step forward in view of slavery. I think socialism is an advancement in view of capitalism. It is a more humane society, more humane and more fraternal. That is our concept of our system.

We believe in man. If you do not believe in man, then you should be a capitalist. If you believe in man, you can be a socialist. If you think that man is an animal that moves only because of fear, because you put a carrot in front of him, then you can never be a socialist.

[Shriver] [laughs] OK, I think it's over.

Vice President on Human Rights, Panama, Angola

PM021134 Paris L'HUMANITE in French 29 Feb 88 p 16

[Report by Jose Fort: "Intolerable American Pressures"]

[Text] Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez spent a few hours in Paris this weekend before flying to Kuala Lumpur, where the "Southern Commission" is due to meet under the chairmanship of former Tanzanian President Nyerere. He had enough time to meet with French journalists and comment on some aspects of international politics.

On the eve of the vote on a resolution submitted in Geneva by the United States aimed at condemning Cuba's human rights record, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez stressed the U.S. Administration's "irritating obstinacy" and the "enormous pressure" exerted by Washington to try to blacken Cuba. The Cuban vice president reaffirmed that his country respected all human rights and that his government gave a "comprehensive dimension to them by guaranteeing "rights to education, work, and so forth" in addition to political rights. Indeed, which other country in Latin America can live up to Cuba's record in the spheres of freedom, health, and education, for instance?

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez has no specific information about the attitude the French Government will adopt in Geneva. "We have had talks with the president's office and the government; we have confidence in the French authorities," the Cuban leader said.

"In the human rights sphere," he added, "nothing is ever perfect. We may have made mistakes. They have never been the result of decisions by the leadership. Over the past 30 years, nobody has been condemned without being able to defend himself and without the law being respected." The Cuban vice president confirmed that several hundred counterrevolutionaries are still in prison and described the figure of 15,000 political prisoners put forward by the U.S. Administration as "ridiculous." Carlos Rafael Rodriguez recalled the attacks on Cuban officials planned in Washington and the acts of sabotage perpetrated against the island. "If Cuba had been left alone, there would have been no prisoners," he stressed.

The Cuban vice president answered questions relating particularly to the situation in Panama and Angola. He condemned the "intolerable U.S. intervention in Panamanian internal affairs," and he said: "We respect the Panamanian people's decision and maintain good relations with their government."

With regard to Angola, following the Luanda meeting attended by Angolan leaders, U.S. Government representatives, and Jorge Risquet, member of the PCC Politburo, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez said that no new

discussion had taken place and that the situation in the field had deteriorated. "Unless the problem of South African intervention is resolved," he said, "nothing will be settled." He confirmed that Cuban military reinforcements had been sent to Angola.

Third Plenary Meeting of UJC Opens

FL011930 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 1 Mar 88

[By Amada Montado]

[Text] The third plenary meeting of the Union of Young Communists [UJC] began this morning at the Julio Antonio Mella UJC national cadre school. PCC Politburo member Vilma Espin and other party and state leaders are present at the event. Pedro Hurtado, national coordinator of the Sandinist Youth-April [as heard] 19 group, is also present.

No material was circulated prior to the meeting as a basis for discussion. Nevertheless, the opening speech by UJC First Secretary Roberto Robaina stressed some of the topics that will be debated during the event, such as spontaneous youth groups, crime, the lack of personal example, free time, and other matters.

The meeting began at 0900 and more than a dozen speeches have been given on the topics of political training and the work done with youths that are neither working nor studying [desvinculados] in the special municipality, Isle of Youth.

To successfully confront all this, it is necessary, above all, to be informed, said (Enit Arlin Prieto), member of the UJC National Committee. By consensus, the rest of the collective was in the process of self-criticism.

We expect the plenum to discuss in detail today the causes of political-ideological problems and how these should be confronted.

Aldana Gives Closing Speech

FL021610 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] Carlos Aldana, secretary of the PCC Central Committee, has delivered the closing speech at the third plenary meeting of the national committee of the UJC. The meeting was held at the Julio Antonio Mella cadre school in Havana.

Aldana said that no single problem related to youth is foreign to the UJC. He added that young people should feel completely represented by the UJC and look on it as their own UJC.

The plenum examined the work of the organization, as well as the political-ideological training of future generations.

Communist, Labor Party Delegations To Meet

GDR's Hermann Axen Arrives

FL271940 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 27 Feb 88

[Text] The delegations that will participate in the meeting of foreign affairs secretaries of communist and labor parties of socialist countries continue arriving here. The meeting will begin in Havana next Monday.

Hermann Axen, member of the Politburo and Secretariat of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany Central Committee, was received at the Jose Marti International Airport by Jorge Risquet and Julio Camacho, members of the PCC Politburo. The leaders of the two countries discussed matters related to the development of the meeting.

Lao Delegation Welcomed

FL261943 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Somlak Chanthamat, secretary and chairman of the propaganda board of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party Central Committee, arrived this morning in Cuba. Upon his arrival at the Jose Marti International Airport in our capital, the distinguished visitor and his delegation were received by Jorge Risquet, PCC Politburo member.

Somlat Chanthamat and his entourage will participate in the meeting for secretaries in charge of foreign affairs of the central committees of communist and labor parties of socialist countries for 1988. The meeting will be held from 29 February to 3 March in this capital.

PCC Central Committee officials and diplomats from the Lao Embassy in Havana were also present to welcome the delegation.

Risquet, Bilak at CSSR Anniversary Ceremony

FL261525 Havana Television Service in Spanish 0100 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] The construction of socialism began in the CSSR 40 years ago with the active popular participation that defeated the maneuvers of the reactionaries. The main ceremony to mark this important event was held in Cuba this afternoon. It was presided over by Jorge Risquet Valdes, member of the PCC Politburo, and by Vasil Bilak, member of the Presidium of the Czechoslovak Communist Party [CPCZ].

The Czechoslovak leader highlighted the importance of victorious February for the socialist course undertaken by his people. Bilak said that changes are underway in his country in keeping with present needs.

Another speaker at the ceremony was Jose Luis Beltran, president of the Cuban-CSSR Friendship Society, who emphasized the historic role played by the Czechoslovak communists.

[Begin Beltran recording] The CPCZ, in its vanguard role, took root in the conscience of the people, becoming the representative of the national and social interests of the workers. It was a decisive force in the anti-fascist struggle. [applause] [end recording]

1988 Trade Agreement With Ethiopia Signed

FL271645 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 27 Feb 88

[Text] Cuba and Ethiopia yesterday in Havana signed a trade agreement for 1988. Interest was expressed in establishing balanced trade based on medium- and long-range agreements.

Cabrisas Ends Official Visit to Greece

FL261533 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Ricardo Cabrisas, Cuban minister of foreign trade, has ended an official visit to Athens. The Cuban official met in the Greek capital with his counterpart, Nikolaos Akritidhis, and Minister of Economy Panayiotis Roumeliotis. They discussed ways to develop commercial relations.

BASTION Names Soviet Military Attaches

LD281205 Belgrade TANJUG in English 0952 GMT 28 Feb 88

[Text] Havana, Feb 28 (TANJUG)—The Cuban military daily BASTION published in its latest issue the photographs and names of all Soviet military attaches in Cuba up until now, which is unprecedented in the two countries' 27-year-long military relations.

The minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, General Raul Castro Ruz, last week revealed the names of the eight generals and said that current Soviet Defence Minister General Dmitriy Yazov was a member of the Soviet military staff in Cuba in the early 1960s.

Neither Cuba nor the Soviet Union disclosed, however, the number of Soviet military personnel in Cuba.

Bahamas

Diplomatic Ties Established With Bangladesh

FL030103 Bridgetown Cana in English 1926 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Nassau, Bahamas, Feb 26, CANA—The Bahamas has formally established diplomatic relations with Bangladesh, a partner in the Commonwealth group.

Brigadier A.N.M. Nuruzzaman on Thursday presented his credentials to Governor General Sir Gerald Cash, becoming the first Bangladesh ambassador accredited to this country.

In a short message to Sir Gerald, Brigadier Nuruzzaman said the destiny of developing countries like Bangladesh and the Bahamas were "inextricably linked". Noting the two countries were linked to each other through the Commonwealth and the Nonaligned Movement, he said it was imperative that closer ties be developed.

In the responding to the ambassador, Sir Gerald said he was confident that through Brigadier Nuruzzaman, existing friendly relations between the two countries would be strengthened.

Dominican Republic

Political Groups, Unions Call for Strike

FL021547 Bonaire Trans World Radio in English 1130 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] Merchants in some sections of Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, shut their doors yesterday in a strike to protest rising food prices.

Defense Minister General Antonio Imbert ordered tanks into the Capotillo section Monday after youthful strikers burned tires in the streets to block traffic. Police arrested dozens of protestors, but no injuries or deaths were reported.

Numerous political groups and unions have called for a general strike today in the central section of the country. A wave of anti-government violence since mid-February has taken at least five lives in the Dominican Republic.

Haiti

Konakom Calls on Groups To Remobilize

FL022308 Port-au-Prince Radio Soleil Network in Creole 1200 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Excerpts] The National Committee of the Congress of Democratic Movements [Konakom] recalls in a press release a series of events, such as the tragedy of 29 November 1987 and the 17 January 1988 farce, which dealt the Haitian people's struggle hard blows.

Konakom says: Once again, a macabre force dealt a hard blow to the will of the majority. [passage omitted]

Many citizens have lost their impetus, their confidence in the struggle for democracy.

While we study the new political situation in the country, so that we can take a new, more correct, political direction, Konakom asks all groups—neighborhood groups, student groups, women's groups, professionals, industrial, merchants, unions, peasants, and all political parties—to remobilize and resume the cooperative effort that is the principle means of ensuring the victory of true democracy in Haiti.

There can be no democracy without grassroots organization among the population. [passage omitted]

Konakom reminds the population that in order to not again fall into a dictatorship, into a dog eat dog situation like that of the past 30 years—in which might made right—it is important that citizens remind each other, and that we all remind officials, that it is the Constitution of 29 March 1987 that is the referee and that this Constitution should lay out the rules of the game.

Whatever promises have been made, there can be no change unless the Constitution, which represents the will of the majority, is respected. There can be no change if the grassroots is not politically mobilized, if the grassroots does not participate in the decisions made. There can be no change if the acts of the government are not based on the Constitution.

Konakom reminds organizations and all citizens that the struggle to effect real change in Haiti involves much zig-zagging, that the struggle is thus a long one, and that they must not allow themselves to become discouraged. [passage omitted]

Government Announces Interest Rate Reductions

PA021713 Mexico City XEW Television Network in Spanish 1315 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] The Bank of Mexico has announced new interest rates that are 30 to 40 percent lower. The measure was adopted within the framework of the second phase of the Economic Solidarity Pact, which went into effect in March with the signing of the document last Sunday in the presence of the president of the republic.

A drastic reduction in interest rates and a freezing of foreign exchange rates were two of the main measures of the anti-inflationary financial policy.

The Bank of Mexico announced that effective today, interest rates will be considerably reduced. The annual interest rate for fixed-term deposits for 30-85 days has been dropped from 123.5 percent to 83.5 percent, which is a 40-percent reduction. The interest rate for fixed-term deposits ranging from 90-175 days was reduced by 30 percent, from 109.5 to 79.5 percent; and 180-265 days from 106.5 percent to 76.5 percent, also a 30-percent reduction.

Annual interest rates for promissory notes were reduced as follows: for 1 month, from 139.5 to 119.35 percent, which is a 20-percent reduction and 30- percent less than in February; 3 months, from 118.80 to 88.80 percent, or a 30-percent reduction; and 6 months, from 119.25 to 89.25 percent, also a 30-percent drop.

Meanwhile, the exchange rate at the secondary Mexican stock exchange market, CETES, also dropped: For a term of 28 days they were reduced by 31.42 percent; for a 1-month term they were reduced to an annual rate of 120.27 percent; for a 3-month term they were reduced by 53 percent; and for a 91-day term, they were negotiated at a 99-percent annual rate.

There was also an unusual situation in the foreign exchange market. The supply was high, reversing the traditional trend. The price of the peso increased at private foreign exchange houses, while the foreign exchange rate for the dollar dropped 33 pesos. The Bank of Mexico intervened to regulate the foreign exchange market and announced new fixed rates for March: In the free market, dollars will be purchased at 2,260 pesos and sold at 2,330 pesos. In the controlled market, dollars will be purchased at 2,241 pesos and sold at 2,273 pesos.

In addition, as a result of the drop in interest rates and the controls on the fluctuation of the dollar, a lot of money was invested in the stock exchange market. The index increased by more than 13,000 points, closing at 214,154 points—a 6.76-percent increase in a day's activity that brought to mind the best days in the market exchange system.

Guatemala

Cerezo Condemns Delvalle Ouster, Recalls Envoy

PA030507 Paris AFP in Spanish 0252 GMT 3 Mar 88

[Text] Guatemala City, 2 Mar (AFP)—Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo today protested the incidents in Panama over the past few days and announced that he will recall his ambassador to that country, remarking that he hopes that there will be an end to Central America's "so-called strongmen."

In an exclusive interview with AFP, the Christian Democratic president said that "we have not looked favorably on the fact that they have provoked by force the ouster of President Eric Delvalle."

"We believe this way out is not a sign or symbol that democratization can come about," he said, noting that "there have also been actions against the opposition, and a climate has been created that is not favorable to democracy."

Alluding directly to General Manuel Antonio Noriega, commander in chief of the Panama Defense Forces, the Guatemalan president said that "there must be an end to Central America's strongmen, the hidden dictatorships, or coups de main that can give more power to a given sector."

Cerezo said that the only way to solve the Panamanian political crisis is "to create a space for a subsequent negotiation to ensure that in May 1989 there can be an electoral and democratic way out."

"We are sorry to see that in Panama—as happened in Guatemala's past when there were electoral frauds and harshening of both government and opposition positions—the situation can become radical, leading to a confrontation and making a peaceful solution appear more remote," he added.

He also announced that he will recall General Rodolfo Loboz Zamora, Guatemalan ambassador to Panama, to consult with him "on the real situation that exists" in that nation.

The president said that his government, which put an end to the military governments that held power for the past 16 years in his country, is ready to undertake "any effort aimed at preventing a violent polarization and to create a space to achieve a democratic electoral solution" in Panama.

Cerezo said "We are working in Central America to resolve the political problems between the government and the opposition on the path to peace, on the political path, on the path of an electoral opening, because that is the only path to resolve differences without violence."

Yesterday, Cerezo said Guatemala will remain faithful to the Estrada Doctrine whereby "states and not governments are recognized."

Congress Criticizes Panama's 'Violations'

PA022312 Guatemala City EL GRAFICO in Spanish 2 Mar 88 p 5

Report on Congress resolution issued in Guatemala City on 1 March]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] The text of the Congress resolution on Panama states:

"The Guatemalan Congress resolves:

"First: To forcefully condemn the violation of the Constitution of the Republic of Panama and the disrespect for civilian authority.

"Second: To make known its concern over the violation of constitutional guarantees and procedural laws after the Legislative Assembly of that country proceeded to dismiss President Eric Arturo Delvalle and Vice President Roderick Esquivel, dismissals that the international democratic community condemns in its effort to contribute to the consolidation of legitimate and representative regimes.

"Third: To express our hope to the Panamanian Armed Forces and especially the Panamanian people in general, to whom we express our solidarity, that in the enjoyment of their own self-determination they may find a democratic and legal solution to the crisis they are now facing."

Finally, in the same resolution, it was agreed to send a copy of the approved text to the Panamanian Embassy in our country. [passage omitted]

Nicaragua

Ortega Proposes Direct Talks With Contras

PA030430 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 0300 GMT 3 Mar 88

[Letter handed by President Daniel Ortega to Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo "tonight" at the archbishopric curia; dated 2 March]

[Text] Managua, Free Nicaragua, 2 March 1988

For a dignified peace; free fatherland or death!

Your Eminence Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, president of the Nicaraguan Bishops Conference

Your Eminence:

Through this letter, I reaffirm the Nicaraguan Government's firm determination to bring peace to our country and the Central American region. In keeping with this move for peace and in pursuing this objective, immediately after the signing of the August 1987 agreements I chose you from a slate of candidates to head the National Reconciliation Commission. In November 1987 I asked you to participate as mediator in the Nicaraguan Government's efforts to achieve a cease-fire with the counterrevolution when the talks to reach an agreement were not yet direct talks.

I made all those decisions to comply with commitments we made along with other Central American heads of state when we signed the Esquipulas II agreements.

Through this letter, I wish to acknowledge and express gratitude for the efforts you and your negotiating team made during those talks to reach a cease-fire.

The recent Central American presidents meeting that took place on 15 and 16 January in San Jose, Costa Rica, expressly ratified the validity of the Esquipulas II agreements, especially the differentiation between the cease-fire commitment and the commitment to a political dialogue with unarmed domestic opposition groups.

In order to prevent more deaths and given the urgency to ensure that cease-fire talks move along quickly, my government has decided to implement the following steps:

1. Appoint Army General Humberto Ortega Saavedra, member of the FSLN National Directorate, defense minister, and commander in chief of the Sandinist People's Army, as head of the Nicaraguan Government delegation to start direct talks with the so-called directorate of the counterrevolution.

2. Carry out those meetings at the Sapoa Customs House on Nicaraguan territory.

3. Propose 9, 10, and 11 March as the dates to carry out those meetings to achieve a cease-fire within the framework of the Esquipulas II agreements.

4. Those meetings must take place directly without intermediaries to determine once and for all whether the so-called directorate of the counterrevolution is willing to achieve a cease-fire. We hope this dialogue will allow us to make quick progress in what has been a permanent aspiration of the Nicaraguan Government and yourself, namely, an end to the war that is burdening our people and an assurance that the long-yearned-for peace will come true.

Attentively,

[Signed] Daniel Ortega Saavedra, President of the Republic of Nicaragua

Ortega Comments

PA031434 Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 1205 GMT 3 Mar 88

[Report on news conference by President Daniel Ortega with unidentified reporters on 2 March; place not given]

[Text] The Nicaraguan Government has again given evidence of its interest in reaching a cease-fire agreement in the shortest possible time by appointing Army General Humberto Ortega, member of the FSLN National Directorate and defense minister, as head of its delegation to the talks with the counterrevolutionaries.

President Daniel Ortega reported this tonight to Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, whose role as mediator may come to an end if the mercenary leadership also agrees to meet with the government delegation at the Sapoa border checkpoint on 9-11 March. Listen now to President Ortega's remarks:

[Begin recording] [Ortega] I have been talking with His Eminence Cardinal Obando y Bravo to address the issue of peace, which is of so much interest to the Nicaraguan people and the international community. I have told him that [words indistinct] as mediator. I told the cardinal that when I met with him and asked him to be the mediator, this was basically because at that time we were not disposed to engage in direct talks with the counterrevolutionaries. As you know, the initial meetings were indirect rather than direct.

(?We have made some progress) because we have managed to make direct contacts. However, I expressed to Cardinal Obando y Bravo my concern because time keeps running out, and, as he said himself, a fierce bull must be taken hold of by the horns.

I reminded him that some time ago, when we talked about this subject, he told me that direct contact (?at a higher level) and here in Nicaragua would be very important because this (?would make) the role of mediator (?unnecessary). I explained to him that today I decided to appoint General Humberto Ortega, member of the FSLN National Directorate, defense minister, and EPS commander in chief, as head of the Nicaraguan Government delegation that will hold direct talks with the so-called directorate of the counterrevolution to reach this cease-fire. I have also decided to hold these talks at the Sapoa border checkpoint, in Nicaraguan territory. As you know, this is a checkpoint on the border with Costa Rica.

Therefore, these meetings will be held in Sapoa. The date? We propose the same dates that Cardinal Obando y Bravo has proposed [words indistinct]. This way, we are testing whether or not the so-called directorate of the counterrevolution really has the desire to work for a cease-fire. It will have no excuse, because they have proposed mediation [as heard] at the highest level. Well, I think this is mediation at the highest level.

They have proposed meetings inside Nicaragua. Well, the meetings will be held in Nicaragua, at the Sapoa border checkpoint. These will be direct talks without mediation. We (?think) this may enable us—if the so-called directorate of the counterrevolution really has the desire—to reach an agreement soon. I told the cardinal that, without a doubt, we would not have reached this decisive moment—when we will put the desire to work for a cease-fire to a test—if we had not had his contribution during this initial phase, when there were no direct contacts or talks with the counterrevolutionaries and when the role of a mediator was necessary—I would say even indispensable. I therefore thanked Cardinal Obando y Bravo tonight for his efforts as mediator.

This was done within the National Reconciliation Commission, which will hold a session here tomorrow. I asked him to relay this decision to the counterrevolutionaries, and we will be waiting for a response from the counterrevolutionaries. Let there be no pretext, let there be no condition, because there is no room for pretexts or conditions with regard to this gesture, this desire of the Nicaraguan Government. We are demonstrating our readiness to comply with the agreements and, above all, our willingness to make maximum efforts for the bloodshed to stop, for the war to stop, for children to stop dying in our homeland, for Nicaraguans to stop dying in our homeland, and for peace to come.

We hope the counterrevolutionary leadership will respond in a positive way to this call and will not begin setting conditions or raising pretexts. His Eminence Cardinal Obando y Bravo has understood this very well. I also told him that I would keep in touch with him, as president of the National Reconciliation Commission, to exchange views and to discuss all we are doing for peace in our homeland.

[Reporter] [Passage indistinct] Don't you think this may hinder progress in the negotiations?

[Ortega] Well, we must wait for them to meet first and then decide. Maybe they will decide to call in some observers. The important thing is that they meet in the first place, that they meet and decide how they will work. I think this may be more expeditious.

[Reporter] First: Commander, Nicaragua maintains the position of holding cease-fire talks only through mediation. Second: Who is the new...

[Ortega, interrupting] Haven't you understood this? I am saying that the mediation was necessary while there was no inclination for [direct] contacts, while the conditions for holding direct talks were not there, and that this was why we resorted to the cardinal. Now that we are appointing a member of the FSLN National Directorate—the defense minister—to do this job, there is no reason for the mediation any longer, and even less now that this will be done in Nicaraguan territory. Therefore, there is no reason for the mediation, and we think the talks can become more expedient and more concrete results can be achieved if there is actually the desire and once the delegations are alone—that is, the delegation of the counterrevolutionary directorate on the one side, and the delegation of the Nicaraguan Government on the other.

We are pinning our hopes on this effort, after having decided to hold the meetings in Nicaraguan territory, and we are proposing the dates of 9, 10, and 11 March to begin these meetings.

[Question indistinct]

[Ortega] What they have to discuss is the cease-fire.

[Reporter] The only role of the mediator was to communicate with [words indistinct] the contras? [passage indistinct]

[Ortega] That is right. I asked the cardinal to communicate with the contras in order to [words indistinct] and he [words indistinct]. The role of the mediator has already been completed during the first stage. The role of mediator was necessary at first when there were no direct talks. Then this rapprochement was achieved to the point that we will hold direct talks.

[Reporter] Commander, what if the contras do not accept (?the mediator) [words indistinct]?

[Ortega] Let's first wait and see what the contras have to say. We should not jump to conclusions beforehand.

[Reporter] Commander, [words indistinct]?

[Ortega] Well, Gen Ortega, [Vice Defense Minister] General Cuadra, and Vice Foreign Minister Tinoco. We will decide later on if some other comrades will join the delegation.

[Reporter] Commander, what if the contras do not accept the idea of a higher-level delegation?

[Ortega] We must wait and see what they will have to say. I cannot take a negative position on their part for granted. I have to hope for a positive reaction on their part, because we are doing our best.

[Reporter] Is this what the government hopes for?

[Ortega] We hope they will react positively. The U.S. Government (?should) accept this reasonable proposal, which represents the Nicaraguan people's great desire to work for a cease-fire.

[Reporter] Commander, does what you have just said have to do with the letter the cardinal sent to you today, particularly regarding his saying that you were misinformed about the agenda he presented [words indistinct]?

[Ortega] No, no. The cardinal and I have exchanged letters in the past few days. The two of us share a common concern over reaching an agreement for a cease-fire. I would say that the cardinal has played an important role during this period during which we have been working for a cease-fire. We should interpret this decision to be the result of all those efforts. We do not think we should link this decision to specific aspects of the letter [written by Cardinal Obando y Bravo]. The letter discusses a number of points and issues. I also have brought up a number of points and issues in my letter. What really counts is a common interest in achieving peace.

[Reporter] Thanks. Commander, the fact that the national commission [words indistinct] military aspects cannot prevent the discussion of politics once again during the talks?

[Ortega] The Esquipulas agreements are clear enough. A cease-fire is a cease-fire, regardless of what you want to call it. This is what we will discuss. This is what Nicaragua will try to define. This has to do with specific points. Other points, however, refer to political aspects. Those points must be discussed with either the civic opposition groups or with the groups that have laid down their arms. This is very clear, not only in the 7 August Esquipulas agreements, but also in the document we signed in Costa Rica on 6 January. In that document we ratified the agreements and differentiated between the various actions, including a cease-fire, that all we Central American presidents must take. We must stress that among the Central American countries that have internal armed groups, Nicaragua is the only one currrently making earnest efforts to comply with the peace efforts. I think President Duarte must comply. He is not complying. The Salvadoran guerrillas have proposed meeting with Duarte, but he has turned a deaf ear; yet, he must comply.

[Reporter] How about points of agreement?

[Ortega] We are now moving on to a new stage. We will now talk in Nicaraguan territory. [Words indistinct] will be there, and we hope the so-called counterrevolutionary directorate will be there, too. We will start a new stage, and we will see if a willingness really exists to make peace become a reality in Nicaragua.

[Reporter] Does your decision have anything to do with the U.S. congressional vote scheduled for tomorrow?

[Ortega] No. The two are unrelated. This decision deals instead with the fulfillment of the peace plan.

[Reporter] Commander, what about the Democrats' proposal of aid for the mercenaries?

[Ortega] I have already said that this represents an intervention in Nicaragua. It is an action of disrespect for international juridical order, international law, and U.S. law itself. The latter forbids the United States from taking this kind of aggressive action against a country with which it has relations, against a country on which it has not declared war.

Obando on Ortega Meeting

PA031610 Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 1220 GMT 3 Mar 88

[Interview with Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo by unidentified reporters following Obando y Bravo's meeting with President Daniel Ortega at the archbishopric curia in Managua on 2 March—recorded]

[Text] [Obando y Bravo] The president thanked me for my effort. He said, however, that because the delegations could now hold a face-to-face meeting, and particularly now that the government delegation will be headed by General Humberto Ortega, they think a mediator's services will no longer be necessary. He told me the meeting will be held at the Sapoa border checkpoint. He plans to hold the meetings on 9, 10, and 11 March. He wants the National Resistance [RN] to appoint its delegation for this meeting.

I will simply... [changes thought] I have the obligation of calling the RN to also reiterate to them my thanks for the confidence they had in the mediator. After all, I had been asked to become the mediator by both President Ortega and the RN. I must therefore thank them for this. As a final service, tonight I will try to call the RN members to let them know I am no longer a mediator and to report to them the president's decision.

[Reporter] What are your views about this new step by the Nicaraguan Government?

[Obando y Bravo] I think a mediator tries to serve the people. I have always maintained that for a mediator to carry out his task, the two parties must be in agreement. A mediator should stop mediating the moment one of the parties says: The mediator has already provided his services, and we thank the mediator for his efforts. We think that [words indistinct], however. As a Nicaraguan, as a Christian, and as a bishop, I hope they will succeed and will achieve peace for Nicaragua. I do hope they will be able to achieve peace. If they are able to find peace in this way, I will be very happy about this.

[Reporter] Do you consider this a step forward in the peace process?

[Obando y Bravo] At this moment, I do not believe I am the right person to make a judgment. They may believe this is a step forward, but we will have to wait and see how the RN feels. If the RN also considers this a step forward, I will be very glad, because I have been very concerned about the deaths of our people. Our people are suffering, and the economic situation and all other problems you are aware of really worry me.

[Reporter] Do you believe this situation has occurred because of the exchange of letters you had with President Ortega this week?

[Obando y Bravo] I could not... [changes thought] I mean, at this moment I do not know; this may have contributed. I simply want to be honest. What President Ortega has told me is that at the moment the delegations hold a face-to-face meeting, and especially at the moment the Nicaraguan delegation is headed by Gen Humberto Ortega, at that moment the function of the mediator will no longer be necessary. He told me: Perhaps you could go to the Sapoa border checkpoint to make the introductions, but the delegations should then be left alone there. I truly think that my presence is not necessary there. I will call the RN to inform them of this decision and to tell them the dates when President Ortega plans to hold the meetings.

[Reporter] Do you disagree with this decision?

[Obando y Bravo] The National Reconciliation Commission and the parties—I mean the members of the parties comprising the commission—have pointed out the need to resume talks between the government and the political opposition. They want the government to study the possibility of holding a dialogue with the 14 political parties, to review what points have been fulfilled and what points have not been fulfilled, and to discuss other issues. This has been suggested by the parties comprising the commission. I believe holding such a meeting would be interesting. The church would then hold a bishops' meeting and subsequently meet with the National Reconciliation Commission.

[Reporter] If your services as mediator are required again, would you be willing to cooperate?

[Obando y Bravo] We are the kind of people who do not make impromptu decisions. We always think carefully before making a decision. We would obviously try to make a judicious decision.

[Reporter] Cardinal, this afternoon you proposed [words indistinct]. Do you believe this government decision aims to avoid discussing the subjects you mentioned? Do you believe this [words indistinct] would prevent success?

[Obando y Bravo] There is no doubt about this. My proposal, which you already know very well, aimed to create mutual ground on what we considered an impasse. The proposal naturally included granting amnesty to political prisoners, allowing unrestricted freedom of expression, and establishing a dialogue with the opposition political parties. The proposal also included reviewing the Military Patriotic Service Law and other points proposed by the RN. In other words, the RN would enter certain designated areas with their weapons and ammunition for a 30-day period to see if it is possible to make some progress in the negotiations in a climate of peace and calm. That was our proposal. Of course, a mediator makes proposals and is obliged to make suggestions to ensure that the objective is achieved. I realize, however, that the parties are not obliged to agree to the proposal. One of the parties did not agree to the proposal, and the other party already [words indistinct] the RN. The RN told me: We reiterate our acceptance of the 18 February proposal, and we reiterate that we accept the agenda included in the letter addressed to the president.

[Reporter] Do you believe these (?talks) could be successful [words indistinct]?

[Obando y Bravo] I am very honest in these matters. At first, I thought these talks would not succeed. Politics also depends on the circumstances. When we began to discuss the problem, I thought that just to negotiate an end to military activites would be very difficult. However, very often circumstances make it possible to change some things.

Panama

Solis Palma, Cabinet Meet; Abadia Comments

PA022222 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 2007 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Report by Alberto Sanchez; passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Text] The first cabinet meeting presided over by His Excellency President Manuel Solis Palma was held today at the Palace of the Herons. Radio Nacional was able to ascertain that the cabinet meeting was attended by Public Works Minister Rogelio Dumanoir, Comptroller General Francisco Rodriguez, acting Education Minister Jorge Arosemena, Government and Justice Minister Rodolfo Chiari, and Finance and Treasury Minister Hector Alexander.

Following the cabinet meeting, Foreign Minister Abadia Arias issued statements and reaffirmed to the news media that relations between Panama and the United States continue at their lowest level. He also stated that he has no information about the mobilization of U.S. helicopters and troops over Panamanian territory.

[Abadia] "We have already heard about the Colombian Government's complaint. We talked with the president yesterday and asked him to hold a news conference with nine Colombian journalists in Panama so he could talk about Panama's situation and expand on his statements—meaning that he never tried to insult the brother Colombian people. Given that the issue was given such wide coverage in Colombia, President Solis Palma called the Colombian journalists and clearly explained Panama's fraternal attitude toward Colombia."

Abadia Arias also justified the Foreign Ministry's decision to recall Panamanian ambassadors abroad for consultations.

[Abadia] "We cannot talk about withdrawals. I explained yesterday, when leaving the Legislative Assembly's facilities, that this is quite normal, and we do it frequently. If a situation arises and it cannot be analyzed, or if it is not clear from a distance, governments frequently decide to recall their ambassadors for consultations. Thus, the ambassadors provide a first-hand report to their governments on the situation and explain what is occurring in the country they are accredited to. This is a perfectly normal diplomatic action, and we understand it."

Foreign Minister Abadia also explained the issue concerning the Panamanian Government's recognition by other countries and what it means.

[Abadia] "The idea is not to elaborate on this. I said yesterday this is not a relay race to see how many countries recognize the new government in the shortest amount of time; that is not the idea. The important thing is that our people recognize us. We must also recognize the people's basic needs. That is the basic issue; the rest will come later."

Foreign Minister Abadia also referred to the situation at the Panamanian Embassy in the United States. His reply was very short.

[Abadia] "The situation remains unchanged."

Solis Holds News Conference

PA030113 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 2103 GMT 2 Mar 88

[News conference with President Manuel Solis Palma with national and international reporters at hotel in Panama City on 2 March—recorded]

[Text] [Moderator] Mr President, we thank you for your attention to this invitation today. To begin this deference by the president to national and international journalists, we ask Manuel Solis Palma, minister in charge of the Presidency, to move closer to offer his message.

[Solis] Mr State Ministers, Mr Comptroller, journalist friends, radio commentators, friends all: First, my apologies for having arrived 1 hour late. Unfortunately, I had no other alternative because a delegation arrived from Colombia to interview me. The plane was late; the conference began at 1200; and it ended just now. Therefore, I beg you to excuse me for arriving late. I asked Jose Hernandez yesterday to invite you to a luncheon as a tribute I render to the men and women who dedicate their lives to reporting the truth, to making democracy effective, with all the inconveniences and setbacks that you have to confront in your careers. Therefore, I want to state that this luncheon is only my intimate conviction of the value each one of you has, regardless of whether or not you share our ideas. I wanted the foreign journalists who are in Panama to be present also, because it is necessary that they know we appreciate their work, independently of the fact that the reports published abroad sometimes are not in keeping with what is really occurring in Panama. But we do not blame them for that. We know everything that lies behind these problems. What is published is often not what they reported. There are given interests; we understand it. For them, as well as for all the social communicators of my country, my enthusiastic greeting and my expressions of respect, warmth, and sympathy. Thank you very much. [applause]

[Moderator] We will ask the reporters to eat first, and then you can raise whatever questions you wish.

Our work, our responsibility is always to have an opinion, a criterion, an observation of events. That is why we apologize for the factors that were given at the beginning of this luncheon. In any case, the president is available for a few minutes, because today's working agenda is quite heavy. We request the questioners to please identify themselves and their media. As is traditional among national and international journalists, we have always granted the first question to the president of the Association of Foreign Press Correspondents accredited to Panama, Mr Tomas Alberto Cupas. Mr Cupas, please.

[Cupas] Mr President.

[Moderator] You will have a wireless microphone so you can question without any problems.

[Cupas] Mr President, is it all right?

[Moderator] Those persons wishing to get the audio here will be given a few minutes to get in place and then permit the television to record the scenes.

[Cupas] The first question, which you have given me the honor to ask, is: Will there be an announcement of a cabinet reshuffle?

[Solis] Thank you, Cupas; I will gladly answer your question. There will not be an announcement of a change in the cabinet or ranking government positions as yet. We have only been filling already vacant posts and posts left vacant because of resignations. We are doing this mostly in the consulates and in the diplomatic service. We are maintaining the same officials in other positions until the situation is analyzed adequately.

On this subject, I would like to state that this is being delayed because we are interested in carefully analyzing each appointment, because it should be part of a work plan, of the national development program, of specific goals. Otherwise, we would first be appointing a person, and then determining what his role would be.

Of course, we know the specific task of each ministry. However, a person must be chosen according to the specific goals, the actions, the objectives, the programs of

each ministry for the immediate future. This does not mean we have to change the current ministers. However, any change made will be done according to the pending work.

[Cruz] Mr President, Marcela de Cruz of CNN. President Delvalle has ordered certain measures for the Panama Canal Commission and certain U.S. banks to suspend a series of payments to your government. How will you cope with these measures?

[Solis] We are just finding out about what you have said. Naturally, we will take all pertinent measures. First, that is a criminal action. No government official, not even the president of the Republic—and he is not the president of the Republic—can issue orders on the destination of funds that belong to the Panamanian nation. Therefore, that is a crime. The ways of collecting and depositing resources that are the nation's property have already been established by the Republic's Constitution and laws. No one can be above that. Imagine if tomorrow I were to order funds collected in a given consulate to be deposited in a account I were to establish, or to a relative, or a friend, etc. That makes no sense. I cannot dispose of state funds; I only have the right to draw on those funds in the manner established by law.

This is the job of the Finance Ministry, and it is verified by the office of the Republic's comptroller general. Any official who does this in a different manner is committing a crime and should be punished. This is the first aspect.

Let us see if there are provisions in other states to determine this situation. For example: Let us say we decide to seize Belize's funds because we do not like a situation with them, and then we order measures to be taken in Panama against a foreign country. That is an outrageous and unacceptable intervention. Concerning other measures we should take, we will discuss them fully with the persons who compose the government, in their respective ministries and their specific posts. That is what I can tell you about that aspect, but we are not going to remain passive.

[Cabrera] Mr President, Manuel Cabrera of ACAN-EFE. In your message or speech yesterday to the Legislative Assembly, you said if there were a process of economic pressure against Panama, your government would struggle for survival and resort to any means or any country. Should we take that statement literally or figuratively: any means, any country—for example, Libya?

[Solis] Why should it have to be Libya, specifically? Why does it have to be a communist country?

[Cabrera] No, excuse me, Mr President, I was just giving an example.

[Solis] When I say any means, I am not saying this literally. We are going to do everything possible, but there are many means. One has to choose at the given moment which of these means are to be used first, and not last. We will determine that at the given moment.

[Cabrera] The reference to any country: Were you planning to request economic, financial, or political assistance from a country without diplomatic representation here?

[Solis] I do not understand your question.

[Cabrera] Concerning the issue of resorting to any country, you are thinking of a country, for example, that does not have an embassy here?

[Solis] No, I did not think of a country. I thought of my country, which is different. When I say this, I am talking of saving my country, and not thinking with which country. One has the responsibility of giving the Panamanian people the salvation it needs at a given moment when there is an attempt to sink the country. At that moment, I am not thinking with which instrument or by which means. I merely stated—and let it be clearly understood— our obligation, our commitment, and our love of the Panamanian fatherland that many have lost.

[Tulande] Mr President, Francisco Tulande of Colombia's RCN [National Radio Network]. There is a serious note from President Barco's government regarding your statements at the San Miguelito rally. The Barco government claims that you questioned democracy in Colombia. Have you replied to that note?

[Solis] The note is being answered by the Foreign Ministry. I have not questioned Colombian democracy. I set as an example certain situations that are given in a democracy, which are not the perfection of democracy. It is an ideal of democracy, but it is not given in a perfect manner in any country of the world, bar none.

Therefore, I said criticism of Panamanian democracy is unfounded, because our democracy is not perfect. However, it is a democracy, as I believe Colombian democracy is a democracy, which cannot be perfect because perfect democracies do not exist in the ideal sense of the word.

A democracy cannot be criticized because of a specific action. That is what I meant. I cannot disregard the existence of democracy in the brother country of Colombia, because it is afflicted by democratic problems. This is the point people do not understand. I am not criticizing Colombian democracy. I believe that democracy exists in Colombia, but it is not perfect; and I pointed out some of the problems and compared them with ours, in the same way I point out failures in U.S. democracy. To mention only one, in our imperfect democracy, there

is no racial discrimination. In theirs, it existed and still exists. There are many other points we could mention, but this would not mean the United States does not enjoy a democracy.

However, they should realize we also have a democracy, and each reporter must understand that I was replying to a radio reporter who insisted on asking where there is democracy in Panama. When he asked this question for the third or fourth time, I replied that I could not ask where there is democracy in Colombia, just because it made a mistake. I could not do that. There is democracy, but there are points—which are not mistakes—that are measures that must be implemented to preserve democracy, because one cannot allow destruction for the sake of democracy.

[Reporter] Mr President, David [word indistinct] Diaz of Channel 4. Several governments have not recognized your government. How do you explain this?

[Solis] When a constitutional government is established, it does not need recognition, and we are not seeking it. A country wishing not to have relations with us would have to give up such relations, but there is no need for recognition. Yesterday, Brazil explained this very clearly. Brazil said they had no reason to recognize us or not. It added that the presence of its ambassador and its not withdrawing him was an expression of its position. Also, Guatemala said that according to the Estrada Doctrine, they have no reason to recognize or not recognize governments; they either maintain relations or break them, but they need not address the problem of recognition.

[Von Heyl] Beatriz Von Heyl of Venezuela's Venevision Channel 4. Mr President, to Venezuelans, there is no democracy without absolute and unrestricted freedom of speech. Could you explain to the Venezuelan people why your government ordered forces to Radio Mundial yesterday to close their transmissions? Thank you, Mr President.

[Solis] Perhaps I could say that you are again idealizing what democracy is: There is no democracy without absolute freedom of speech; there is no democracy where people are hungry and where there is no absolute respect for human life; in sum, there is no democracy where this or that is not done. We could list a number of things.

I could say to the young lady from Venevision that for me, Venezuela represents a special case. I lived in Venezuela for 10 years and cherish the best memories. Therefore, I can in no way hurt the feelings of its people and government. However, without pointing out details, I could also mention many aspects that could turn out not to be democratic when viewed theoretically by a reporter—when viewed only under the light of theory and not under the reality of imposing certain measures, such as actions taken in that country I could call my second fatherland.

I think Venezuela has an enormous democracy, but I could note many actions that, as seen from abroad and without going into detail, could keep it from being considered a democracy. We will avoid mentioning examples.

[Duque] Juan Carlos Duque of LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA. Mr President, international dispatches arriving in Panama yesterday cite excerpts of a conversation between you and President Alan Garcia. Those dispatches say you promised to reestablish freedoms in Panama, including freedom of speech. We, the Panamanian newsmen, Panamanian society, and the news correspondents who are gathered here today would like to see liberties restored in Panama, or certain liberties—especially since presently most of the newspapers are closed, some radio stations are closed, a television channel is closed, and the public streets are a place for expression by some, but for others, such expression is a mere illusion.

[Solis] There is a problem of conception expressed by you. The fact that most are closed is a problem in your opinion. There are closed media. It is true that while talking to the Peruvian president I voiced my conviction that the communications media must operate with total liberty. I refer to press, radio, and television. I am sure if I were to ask Alan Garcia if he believes there is liberty in Peru, in view of the suspension of guarantees in his country because of the Shining Path attacks, he would say yes. I think so, and I am convinced of that. Will you reestablish the guarantees? I am sure he would answer yes. When? When the Shining Path ceases to be a threat to the democracy, peace, and tranquillity of Peru.

I can tell you the same thing. It involves the tranquillity, peace, and calm of the Panamanian people. Here we have tolerated...[changes thought] about the avenues being one way, you are right. On 50th Street, the motorcades occupied two, three, or four lanes of an avenue in the opposite direction, and one could not travel. It is true that they were occupied. You apparently forgot about that. If that is what you are referring to, we are totally in agreement. Rights [libertades] in Panama will be reestablished when those media prove not to be a threat to the peace, tranquillity, democracy, and calm of Panamanians, ideals that are above the vested interests of a given radio or television station. [applause]

[Meeham] Mr President, Graciela Meeham of Radio Monumental. If the strike continues, what measures will your government take?

[Solis] We are speaking hypothetically. If the strike is prolonged, my government will extend its popular support to confront the strike. [applause] But I say it is hypothetical, because the strike is waning. The reports I have right now are that the culminating point ended yesterday or early this morning. The information on this afternoon's activities indicates that the strike is losing strength. For example, virtually all of the furniture stores

were closed yesterday; today, only 40 percent are closed. Yesterday, approximately 60 or 70 percent of the banks were closed; today 46 percent were closed. I can give you figures on the different activities and tell you that everything indicates there is a decline in the strike. If that were to change, we would also consider the situation in light of the reality that exists. To theorize on these matters is good as a mental exercise, but does not resolve the specific problem.

[Lewis] Mr President, Paul Lewis of Chile's Santiago television. I will ask two questions in one. Can you tell us what Panamanian nationalism would be like if there were changes; what would the direction be of this nationalism, this doctrine.

The second question is related to the indictment of General Noriega in two counties of the United States for drug trafficking. I understand that for reasons of dignity that have been expressed, Panama cannot accept this action. Do you consider it advisable to undertake an independent investigation at the national level regarding this involvement of certain officers of the Panama Defense Forces [FDP] in drug trafficking?

[Solis] Please repeat the first question so I can orient myself.

[Lewis] It is regarding the sense of Panamanian nationalism that is going to be promoted.

[Solis] I see. I believe Panama has defined its nationalism throughout its life as a Republic. The Panamanian people have struggled to maintain territorial unity in Panama and safeguard the right to choose their own destiny and actions. The Panamanian people have also emphasized the need to safeguard their culture, customs, language, and everything else that differentiates Panama from other countries. Our nationalism is the strengthening of our national soul. That is our struggle; it might have certain characteristics at any given time, but all are aimed at safeguarding our status as a united, free, independent, and sovereign nation.

Regarding the second question, concerning my thoughts about the indictment, whether I believe the trial is fair and should be held or whether there should be investigations regarding Noriega's involvement in drug trafficking—his alleged involvement in drug trafficking —and the involvement of other members of the FDP: I can tell you that Panama—if it had considered the accusations to be true and there had been proof of it—we would have considered the case and would have called for a trial in Panama. However, we cannot accept that a foreign country that contradicts our interests comes here to judge our authorities or our fellow citizens. We cannot accept a trial where a criminal's sentence is reduced from 50 to 14 years if he testifies. There is not a criminal in the world who, after receiving such a proposal, would not testify what he is told to testify.

I cannot agree—even though that is the Americans' idea of a perfect democracy—because they say they have known for many years that he is a drug trafficker. I ask: Why wasn't he indicted many years ago? Is it perhaps that justice should be enforced when it is most convenient for them, or when they believe they can dominate and crush our country? Gentlemen, there is no drug trafficking here. The issue here is politics and vested interests. We cannot advocate this, because it would involve Gen Noriega, a Panamanian, today; and it might involve a Chilean tomorrow. The president of Chile, or anyone else, might be involved tomorrow, and you would not like it if the northern country behaved like this toward your fellow citizens. We cannot accept that interference. This is a problem that involves only Panamanians, be they honest or corrupt; and it should be solved by Panamanians. Let them indict Sinatra! Let them indict their gangsters! Let them indict their own men, meaning the ones who have free access to the White House because they are the U.S. president's friends or fellow actors. We simply cannot accept it.

[De la Hoz] Mr President, Victor de la Hoz of Radio America. The doctors working in the main hospitals of the capital and the provinces are on strike. We would like to know what guarantees your government will give to the citizenry concerning medical attention and what measures will your government adopt concerning the situation?

[Solis] I believe I am well known for my position concerning these attitudes. [laughter] I do not have to say anything, because I am now president of the Republic. I expect the health minister will fulfill his duty, because we must guarantee the Panamanian people's right to medical attention above all. The measures could either involve salary cuts or dismissals. Let them go to court if they want to. [laughter]

[Pineiro] Mr President, Carlos Pineiro of Bogota's EL TIEMPO. You announced at the Assembly that you would redistribute the enterprises' profits.

[Solis] I would what?

[Pineiro] Redistribute the enterprises' profits, because the surplus would be distributed among the shareholders or owners. Now you say these funds will be invested in the workers' name. How are you going to handle those profits?

[Solis] Excuse me, but my memory seems to be failing; I do not remember that. [laughter] I do not remember that. [laughs] I do not remember when I said that. [laughter]

[Reporter] Mr President, there is currently a problem at the Panamanian Embassy in Washington. There are two ambassadors accredited to the same nation. What measures will you adopt to solve this problem?

[Solis] Panama's Embassy in the United States is in the United States, and the measures, the support, we could request has to come from the U.S. authorities, which so far have refused to support us. Therefore, there is not much we can do. What we have already done is leave the removed ambassador without a salary. Perhaps this is why he has embargoed millions of the National Bank, so he can be paid.

[Dufie] Dante Dufie of LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA and Circuito RPC Radio. Mr President, you have said the closed media can reopen once they represent no threat to the government. Does this mean the government does not accept criticism?

[Solis] Criticism can be made if it points out errors and faults, or provable criminal activities by officials. There is no problem there. What we cannot allow is shameless activities aimed at destabilizing the country. This is not permitted by anyone. We have permitted here something that was called the menu, the menu of the insurrection. It was printed in a newspaper. The unbelievable action here is that this was allowed to be published, and not that the newspaper was closed later. What happens is that a person who steals everyday feels an injustice is being committed against him if he is not allowed to steal. He who daily commits crimes will feel as if he is being abused if he is told he cannot commit any more crimes. No state will allow anyone to say publicly: Tomorrow we will meet in such and such a place to see how we can overthrow the government. Everyone is supposed to accept that quietly and let it be published; and then the menu is printed and published; and there is information about waving handkerchieves, banging pots and pans, doing this and that, jeering, and being disrespectful; and let them call others anything, like killer, criminal, bisexual, whatever comes to their minds; and we are supposed to support all that, because freedom of expression, the sacred freedom of expression, must simply allow that. However, if you were called all those names, you would not be so quiet and would not be asking that kind of question.

[Gonzalez] Justino Gonzalez, of Radio Suave's Imparcial newscast. I want to ask you about the economic proposal that calls for canceling two benefit payments of the extra-month bonus. What will the Executive do, considering the workers have clearly stated they will reject such a measure?

[Solis] The national government has not decided on measures that have been suggested. One suggestion was to hold back payment on two-thirds of the extra- month bonus. However, this measure has not been studied and has not been implemented. This is not clear yet, and I am pretty sure this measure will not be adopted, because not only the workers disagree with this measure, there are ministers, many of us—I am including myself as a minister, because I feel part of them—do not agree with it.

[Reporter] Mr President, are you studying the possibility of a referendum for [words indistinct]?

[Solis] No. We are not considering that measure, because we view it as unnecessary; I will explain why. Elections are just about 1 year away. It takes 3 or 4 months to organize a referendum. By the time the referendum were to take place, we would be only 8 months away from the elections that the Constitution establishes. Then we would have to organize elections that would take place 6 months later. We would have moved up events only 2 months. It does not make sense to go through all the costs, all the unrest, all the uneasiness that a referendum would produce in the country to move events up only 2 months. If you had spoken about this 4 years ago, we could have considered the benefits of doing it, but what practical benefit would it bring now, besides satisfying the curiosity of some politicians or a desire to vote at a referendum and then vote in the elections. It is not practical to do it, because of the time factor; time is running short. A politician who cannot wait 14 months is too impatient and will not be successful in politics.

[Reporter] Mr President, can a minister in charge of the Presidency be a presidential candidate?

[Solis] No one has proposed that, and this does not represent a problem because I am not thinking about it.

[Montano] Mr President, Jose Montano. How do you perceive the attitude of the officials who form part of the international banking center and international credit institutions?

[Solis] I have perceived very little, because we have had this responsibility for only a few days. Two of these days were Saturday and Sunday. So we are talking about Friday, a day of much commotion, of taking sides. Monday we had to take care of immediate problems. Tuesday, we had the inaugural Assembly session. Today, Wednesday, I am having lunch with you here, and holding a news conference. My desire to pay attention to the media takes time. I am not complaining; I am explaining. I have dedicated practically no time to the activity you mention. We have not had time. However, I am planning on approaching these organizations and institutions in a couple of days and then I will be able to answer your question.

[Question indistinct]

[Solis] In my speech, I also said that at the request of FENASEP [National Federation of Public Employees], we were going to initiate the studies—but not to delay, but rather to make more specific. Everyone here has made studies on national development. The problem is to take all studies that have been made and begin to analyze the situation and make a more coherent, overall proposal on what the goals of national development should be. However, we believe in that, and it doesn't make sense to be scared over that. How are we going to

adopt measures if we do not have a basic pattern to work with? The institutions that complement each other many times do not act accordingly, because they do not have a pattern to go by.

Let me cite one example: Suppose we do not structure the overall public health plan within the national development plan, and just imagine we say there will be such a health plan simply because it is advisable, because theoretically it means this and that for the country's benefit. If we do structure it within the national development plan, the Health Ministry and the Social Security Fund must have joint policies. However, if they are not structured this way, the Public Health Ministry and the Social Security Fund would work with different patterns, because the current manager or director of each team thinks in different terms. Then, each institution drifts apart.

In the field of education, if there is not an overall plan, if everyone is not working together in the development of the nation, then the Education Ministry would be acting one way, the universities another way, INDE [National Sports Institute] another way, INNAC [National Institute of Culture] another way, and IPHE [Panamanian Special Rehabilitation Institute] yet another way—then everyone would be working on his own, because everyone has his own concept. There must be an approved plan for everyone to follow, so there will be coherent action in the administration, from the president down to the last official.

[Amador] Good afternoon, Celia Alvarado de Amador, of MATUTINO. First, thank you for inviting us to have lunch with you today. Second, judging from your experience at the Education Ministry, with all the good and bad things that have happened at the ministry; and now in your current post, what measures will you adopt for the teaching-learning process to improve our schools and education programs and thus contribute to improving our students' academic preparation? We know—and you know better than we do—that the teachers have been constantly fighting, that they are responsible for a high percentage of failures. What will you do now in your position?

[Solis] Naturally, when I was education minister, I was very much aware of our educational crisis and the urgent need to adopt a series of measures. These measures have already been prepared at the Education Ministry. They range from changing study programs—these have already begun at the preschool and first grade levels—to reorganizing supervision, controlling the teaching-learning process through diagnostic tests, and administrative reorganizing of the provincial and national plans. These measures also include changes in the concept of the educational process; in the principles, goals, and policies; and each school's most basic operational problems. These measures have already been designed; we were preparing to launch these programs in 1988, over and above any opposition, and I will explain why.

There is no time for anything else. The waiting time is up. Let me give you some truly impressive figures that are even more impressive than our last place ranking in the Math Olympics. By the way, that was not the first time we finished last in those worldwide Math Olympics. We also came in last in the Latin American Olympics held in Colombia. So it was not the first time, but it was very bad because we scored only 7 points out of a total of 242.

In the 1987 university entrance examinations, only 6.7 percent passed the exams at the national campus. At the regional branches of the university, only 2.2 or 2.1 percent passed the tests. This year, the class of 1987—the class of 1986 took the tests in 1987—took the tests with the following results: On the main campus, 0.9 percent passed the test. In the regional university centers, only 0.8 percent passed.

They were not even able to reach 1 percent. Of the 5,000-plus students who attended regional university centers, only 41 students passed their tests. The rest were unable to pass a test that was elementary. It was not a difficult test; it was an elementary test. That is what happened in 1987 as a result of the strikes, which are often applauded by people who are unaware of the damage they are doing to the country. Professors just came to class, not to teach their lessons but to speak about everyone, including the current education minister at the time. They talked ill about Manuel Antonio Noriega and whomever they wanted to criticize. Those were the topics and here are the results.

In the diagnostic tests, the national average was 1.9 out of 5.0. That was the result, and we have proof of that. In view of this situation, can we expect more? Can we allow this to continue in our country? In the next admissions test administered by the university in 1989, corresponding to the 1988 school year, we will see averages of 0.0 and no one will be qualified to enter the university. This test is not so difficult; someone with average intelligence should be able to pass it. We do not have to go very far; there is proof in "Oscar de la Fortuna" [local "Wheel of Fortune" television program, without Vanna White]. [laughter] The contestants are unable to add; they are unable to spell a word; and they do not know anything. What can we expect?

[Macias] Nino Macias of Radio Cadena Millonaria. Mr President, I believe that while our colleagues in other countries question our democracy and the theories of Rousseau and [word indistinct] and other great thinkers, our people, who have supported this government, are concerned about the economic situation: food, staples, and unemployment. What immediate measures will you and your cabinet take? We know the situation is difficult, but we know there are European and Asian countries interested in building factories here. However, someone always gets in the way, and the people remain jobless and hungry, and everything gets complicated.

[Solis] Before giving a concrete reply, I want to clearly establish that this is a normal thing. People always behave that way. The concerns of the people who are hungry and who are not receiving solutions to their basic needs are food, housing, and work. They do not speak of freedoms, which some enjoy. As the economic situation of the people improve, their demands are greater. We will be greatly concerned about the people at the lowest levels, but we will not forget people who are at higher levels. We will not stop appreciating the theories of Rousseau and those other thinkers he mentioned. [laughter]

[Macias, interrupting] Mr President, please...

[Solis] To give you a concrete reply, I must tell you that I have called a cabinet meeting for Saturday, which could continue until Sunday. We will discuss the problems, the measures that will really solve the problems of the people, without forgetting other issues. Tomorrow, I must meet with some sectors, and I have already begun seeking concrete solutions.

[Reporter] Is it true that Panamanian currency will be issued to replace the U.S. dollar? And what about the school year?

[Solis] I will begin by answering your last question. When I was education minister, I always said the school year would begin on schedule. Within the next 5 or 6 days, I will ask the minister in charge of the Education Ministry what the situation in that ministry is.

Regarding paper money, there is no interest or intention. On the contrary, our proposal is not to issue paper money, but to continue with the money that has been circulating in Panama. However, I do not know if the Americans will decide tomorrow not to send any more dollars. I will not let the Panamanian people leave or suspend their activities. We would have to decide then what has to be done. I do not know yet. However, up until now, as long as we can maintain the current monetary system and our commercial relations remain unchanged, we do not plan to issue paper money.

[Martin] Hernan Martin of ACAN-EFE. You spoke earlier about the strike. I would like to ask you how much damage has the business strike caused so far, and how much longer will the country or the government resist the strike?

[Solis] The government can resist the strike for a long time; as long as they want. I would like you to ask them how long they can resist the strike. [applause]

Government Replaces Ambassador to U.S.

PA022350 Panama City Circuito RPC Television in Spanish 2300 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] The Presidential Press Office announced late this afternoon the appointment of Aquilino Boyd as Panamanian Ambassador to Washington [replacing Juan Sosa].

Two Majors Discharged From FDP, Arrested

PA021630 San Jose Radio Impacto in Spanish 1415 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Report from Panama City by Homero Londono]

[Text] It has been confirmed that Major Moises del Rio, former director of Inrenare [Institute of Natural Renewable Resources], and Major Fernando Quezada, former director of the Panama Railroad, have been discharged and are under arrest.

There are strong rumors that this occurred following the disappearance of an entire platoon with all of its weapons.

Chiari Denies Dismissals

PA030030 Hamburg DPA in Spanish 2337 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] Panama City, 2 Mar (DPA)—Government and Justice Minister Rodolfo Chiari de Leon, civilian chief of the Panamanian Armed Forces, today denied reports about alleged dismissals in the Panamanian military organization.

The minister, whose office issues permits to foreign correspondents, also warned he will not allow "journalistic disinformation."

Chiari de Leon added that he would "expel from Panama any foreign correspondents who insist on disinforming about the Panamanian situation."

The minister has already expelled three foreign correspondents for that reason.

Reports Called 'Completely False'

PA031339 Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish 3 Mar 88 pp 1a, 12a

[Text] Colonel Leonidas Macias, a member of the Panama Defense Forces [FDP] General Staff, yesterday denied accounts originating from the United States that said two colonels and two majors had been dismisssed.

"Everything here is normal, and no one has been retired or discharged," Macias said when asked about the alleged retirements of Colonel Marcos Justines, chief of the General Staff; Colonel Elias Castillo; and Majors Fernando Quesada and Moises del Rio.

Parliamentarian Guillermo Cochez of the opposition Christian Democratic Party told foreign correspondents that there was information available on retirements and dismissals.

Macias described the version given to the press as disinformation and added that "it is completely false."

Government To Take Legal Action Against Delvalle

PA030626 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0519 GMT 3 Mar 88

[Text] Panama City, 2 Mar (EFE) —The Panamanian Government headed by President Manuel Solis Palma will take legal action against Eric Arturo Delvalle, who was dismissed, Solis Palma told SER, a Spanish radio network.

The action is a result of Delvalle's decision to "order" the seizure of Panamanian funds and transfers in U.S. banks. Delvalle made the announcement from his hiding place, which is believed to be a U.S. military installation in Panama.

Solis Palma made the statements at a club meeting in Panama City's Chinese community, where he was attending a celebration of the traditional Chinese New Year.

The new president said the actions to be taken are being studied by the attorney general of the Republic, who has a report from the general manager of the National Bank of Panama, which is the institution that has specifically been affected.

Solis Palma said he regrets having to take this measure because he had maintained friendly relations with Delvalle as the education minister in Delvalle's cabinet, but the actions taken by the former president imply "treason to the country."

Injunction Dismissed Against Assembly Leader

PA030533 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 0450 GMT 3 Mar 88

[Text] Televisora Nacional has received a Supreme Court of Justice manifesto to the nation which refers to an injunction presented by Dr Oscar Ucros against Alberto Aleman Boyd. The Supreme Court of Justice states that the Legislative Assembly's judicial action, which was publicly notified through Resolution No 1 dated 26 February 1988, decreed the removal of Messrs Eric Arturo Delvalle and Roderick Esquivel from the post of president and vice president, respectively. Given the evidence included in the Supreme Court of Justice's document, the Supreme Court of Justice enforced justice in the name of the Republic and exercised its legal role this afternoon, officially ruling that it will not admit the injunction presented by Dr Oscar Ucros against the Legislative Assembly president. The Supreme Court of Justice's ruling includes the signatures of Magistrates Manuel Jose Calvo, Alvaro Cedeno, Rafael Dominguez, Rodrigo Molina, Marisol Reyes de Vasquez, Isaac Chan Vega, Gustavo Escobar, Enrique Bernabe Perez, Carlos M. Arce, and Jose Guillermo Broce. It is appropriate to mention that there is an abstention in Magistrate Carlos M. Arce's case.

Solis Dismisses More Delvalle Appointees

PA022210 Panama City Circuito RPC Television in Spanish 1730 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] A decree signed by Minister of the Presidency Manuel Solis Palma, has voided the appointment of Carlos Velarde as a Panamanian member of the Panama Canal Commission [PCC] Board of Directors. Velarde had earlier been dismissed as director of the Social Security Fund. The decree by the minister of the Presidency does not indicate who will replace Velarde as a Panamanian member of the PCC Board of Directors.

Moreover, the appointment of Eduardo Arango as counselor of the Panamanian Embassy in London and as ambassador to the International Maritime Organization has been voided. Solis Palma's decree does not mention who will replace Ambassador Arango.

Noriega Discusses U.S. Economic Pressure

PA031441 Buenos Aires REUTER in Spanish 1345 GMT 3 Mar 88

[Excerpts] Cerro Azul, Panama, 3 Mar (REUTER)—General Manuel Antonio Noriega, Panama's strongman, has described the United States as an aggressor for its decision to suspend canal payments to Panama. "This is further evidence of the U.S. aggression against a weak, small country like Panama," Noriega told reporters at a dinner held last night by approximately 300 supporters in Cerro Azul, near Panama City.

Noriega said Panama is a friend of the United States and described the interruption of canal payments and U.S. steps to urge banks to freeze Panamanian assets as a mistake by Elliott Abrams, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs.

"This merely confirms the misguided policies of Abrams, who is deceiving President Reagan and the U.S. society," he said.

Noriega stressed the U.S. policy only aims to keep the Panama Canal after the year 2000, when it should turn over the canal to Panama in compliance with a 1977 treaty.

Abrams announced the economic sanctions in Washington yesterday as a sign of support for ousted President Eric Arturo Delvalle, who has declared an economic war against Noriega from his hideout in Panama.

The new president, Manuel Solis Palma, who also attended last night's dinner, ruled out the possibility of closing the canal to U.S. ships in reprisal for these sanctions. "I believe our canal is at the world's service," he said.

Noriega has not given any indication that he feels pressured to resign despite these sanctions, a protest strike that is in its 4th day today, and charges by a U.S. court that he is involved in drug trafficking and other crimes.

Solis Palma said he had learned former Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez is working on a possible plan for Noriega, who is 50 years old, to resign shortly before the 1989 presidential elections. Perez is holding talks with Noriega and the United States, Solis Palma said.

The suspension of canal payments by the United States, approximately $80 million annually, "is not only a treaty violation, but a violation of all the rights Panama has to manage its own resources," Solis Palma said. [passage omitted] "The people, who were abandoned (before 1968), are not willing to give up power," he said.

Stones and trash remained scattered in downtown Panama City after groups of demonstrators built barricades before being chased away by riot policemen using tear gas.

The opposition National Civic Crusade today plans to continue the strike that has paralyzed industry and most businesses and banks in Panama City. There is less support for this strike in the country's interior, however.

Crusade Member Says Noriega Destroying Economy
PA021535 San Jose Radio Impacto in Spanish
1405 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Interview with Carlos Ernesto Gonzalez de la Lastra, member of the National Civic Crusade, by unidentified reporter; date and place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Gonzalez de la Lastra] The Civic Crusade, represented by various Panamanian sectors, reports that this strike is not only being supported by the business sector; the civil labor movement is also supporting the strike. The civil labor movement has been in contact with various unions, such as the ones representing industry, construction, and business, and those unions representing the country's manpower, and they have agitated for national vindication.

Before the country and the world, we wish to point out how General Manuel Antonio Noriega is leading this country toward economic destruction. We learned today that the U.S. State Department has not verified that Panama is contributing to the war against drugs. According to U.S. laws, economic sanctions are applied against countries that do not contribute to the war on drugs. Gen Noriega, linked to international drug trafficking, is the one who is leading this country toward economic destruction, through which the poor, the most needy, will be the ones to suffer the most. He is bent on remaining in power without the support of the people; his only support is provided by weapons. Gen Noriega is destroying the country's economy, and we vehemently charge that Gen Noriega's refusal to step down is leading us to poverty and to a situation that will worsen as each day passes.

[Reporter] What exactly do you mean when you say the struggle will continue until democracy is restored?

[Gonzalez de la Lastra] We want the process of militarization, put into effect by the Defense Forces, to end. The military has seized power in the country. They control the Supreme Court of Justice, the Attorney General's Office, the Legislative Branch, and the Executive Branch. They control the government's economic activities, immigration, and ports, and they have complete control over Panama's civilian life. They are above any law.

What the Civic Crusade wants is a true revolution in the country, a return to a de jure state, a truly professional Defense Forces, an Executive Branch elected by the people, and a military institution under civilian institutional control. We want a return to decency, honor, justice, and freedom, which we lost 20 years ago.

Delvalle Warns Against Dealing With 'Regime'
PA021549 San Jose Radio Impacto in Spanish
1415 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Decree issued by President Eric Arturo Delvalle in Panama on 1 March—read by Homero Londono]

[Text] I, Eric Arturo Delvalle, legitimately exercising my authority as Panamanian president and in accordance with Panama's Constitution, proclaim that on 25 February 1988, acting in accordance with my constitutional authority, I removed General Manuel Antonio Noriega as Panama Defense Forces commander in chief in keeping with the Panamanian people's best interests.

Subsequently, Gen Noriega illegally seized control of the country and, acting without constitutional authority, forcibly had Manuel Solis Palma appointed president through illegal procedures conducted by the Legislative Assembly. Noriega's regime is not the legitimate Panamanian Government and is, in addition, illegal according to the Republic's Constitution. This regime is a military dictatorship not recognized by other governments, with a few exceptions such as Cuba and Nicaragua. In addition, it does not have the support of Panamanian citizens. The Panamanian Government, of which I am president, is recognized by the international community as the Republic's legitimate government.

In view of the foregoing, I advise all persons and parties currently carrying out or planning to carry out transactions with the Panamanian Government or the Republic of Panama of the following:

1. Any contract, agreement, or transaction concluded with Noriega's regime or any agency (?acting on its behalf) will not bind or be recognized by the Panamanian Government or the Republic of Panama. Such contracts, agreements, or transactions will have no legitimacy or recognition in the Republic. Anyone carrying out these actions will therefore do so at his or her own risk. Any obligation or debt incurred by Noriega's regime or any agency acting on its behalf will not bind or be recognized by the Panamanian Government or the Republic of Panama.

2. Any payments of taxes, fees, or obligations to the Noriega regime or to any agency acting on its behalf will not be recognized as payments to the Panamanian Government or to the Republic of Panama, which are entitled to acknowledge their receipt.

3. The payment of current or future debts, taxes, or fees to the Panamanian Government, the Republic of Panama, or any agency or entity acting on their behalf must be deposited in an escrow account in the name of the Republic of Panama until further notice.

Issued in the Republic of Panama on 1 March 1988

Signed by President Eric Arturo Delvalle

National Bank Communique Reports Funds Suspended
PA030552 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 0455 GMT 3 Mar 88

[Communique issued by the National Bank of Panama; date and place not given]

[Text] We inform all citizens that the National Bank of Panama, as is usual, requested the delivery of $10 million in cash from the Republic National Bank in New York to meet the cash demands of the national banking system.

We were surprised when we were informed by telephone that the delivery had been frozen by a legal action taken by Mr William Rogers, from the Arnold and Porter firm, before a U.S. federal court on behalf of Mr Juan Sosa.

This legal action, which we consider arbitrary and without any basis, has been taken to the detriment of this institution and the national banking system. We were not given the opportunity to defend ourselves or to make any clarifications. This action implies the freezing of funds that belong to the Panamanian people.

In view of this situation, the National Bank of Panama is taking the necessary steps to deal with those responsible for this because we have not received any type of legal communication from the Republic National Bank in New York or from federal authorities that have participated in this action.

The National Bank of Panama hereby informs all banks in the banking community that we will renew the supply of cash to those banks as soon as this absurd action is resolved. We reassure all clients of the National Bank of Panama that we will continue to provide all banking services in a normal manner as we have done in the past.

The National Bank of Panama deeply regrets this situation, which has been caused by actions that are beyond our control.

Signed, Rafael Arosemena, general manager of the National Bank of Panama.

CBN Tells Banks To Open, Reaffirms Use of Dollar
PA021715 Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish 2 Mar 88 pp 1a, 10a

[Communique issued by Mario de Diego, Jr, executive director of the National Banking Commission, CBN, in Panama City on 1 March]

[Text] Communique to all Panamanian citizens and residents. The CBN reports:

1. The rules regarding banking schedules and dates for serving the public remain in force.

Based on these rules, compliance with the schedule each bank has adopted to serve the people is mandatory for each bank. These rules ensure that the public will be served a minimum of 5 days a week and no less than 25 hours every week.

The appropriate measures therefore have been adopted to ensure the banks' customers have access to banking services (withdrawals, deposits, payments, and other services that are regularly provided by bank tellers) during regular banking hours.

2. The system to supply U.S. dollar bills to the banks established in Panama, which is in effect based on the CBN's Agreement No 1-79 of 19 July 1979, guarantees to all banks immediate, regular, and sufficient availability of currency that is legal tender in the United States (dollars).

3. The banking center in general and each of the banks that comprise it in particular are liquid and solvent.

4. The principles and declarations contained in the CBN's 13 August 1987 communique remain fully in effect:

a) The CBN is the banking system's guiding institution and the sole and highest authority empowered to adopt measures regarding the banking sector.

b) The CBN's functions, duties, interests, thinking, stand, and beliefs are the most solid barrier against any measure to issue or circulate a national currency, to nationalize banking institutions, or to freeze banking deposits.

c) The system of free influx and outflow of capital and exchange, as well as the recognition of the U.S. dollar as the legal tender in Panama, remain fully in effect. This banking system belongs to all Panamanians. It is a reflection of our national character. For this reason, this system cannot be subject to any unilateral action and cannot be changed. The source of the banking system's success lies precisely in the recognition of the U.S. dollar and the absence of a national currency. To ignore the above would amount to economic suicide.

d) The CBN, which comprises public and private bank officials, is the sole official source of information regarding the Panamanian banking system.

Panama City, 1 March 1988.

CBN Executive Director Mario de Diego, Jr

Some Businesses Reopen

PA031450 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1245 GMT 3 Mar 88

[Excerpts] Panama City, 3 Mar (ACAN-EFE)—Panama is in its 4th day of an indefinite paralyzation, with annoucements by the organizers that sectors such as private banking and the supermarket chains resumed their activities today because of fear of attacks on their properties and pressure from authorities.

However, the opposition Civic Crusade claims this will not affect the strike's effectiveness and that the strike will be maintained throughout the country.

Carlos Ernesto Gonzalez de la Lastra and Roberto Brenes, leaders of the opposition civic organization, reported that farmers have cut the flow of food supplies to the capital, which means to the civic organizers greater support of the strike.

Wednesday night, however, the government announced that the [government-run] supply market [mercado de abastos] would work around the clock to counter possible food shortages. [passage omitted]

As for the duration of the strike, the civic opposition says the strike will be extended on a day-to-day basis after evaluating the situation. Meanwhile, new President Manuel Solis Palma was asked "How long can the commercial and business sector hold out in their position?"

"If the strike is prolonged, the government will increasingly rely on the people's support to counter it" said Solis, who accepted the post following the dismissal on Friday of Eric Arturo Delvalle, 6 hours after Delvalle announced the ouster of General Manuel Antonio Noriega as head of the Army. [passage omitted]

Air Panama Diverts Miami-Bound Flight to Cuba

PA030611 Paris AFP in Spanish 0540 GMT 3 Mar 88

[Text] Panama City, 2 Mar (AFP)—An Air Panama flight enroute to Miami was suddenly diverted to Cuba today for fear the U.S. authorities would confiscate the aircraft, according to Air Panama sources.

The fear of an embargo against the aircraft is based on the request issued this week by deposed Panamanian President Eric Arturo Delvalle, who asked the United States to embargo all the Panamanian Government's assets in U.S. territory.

Air Panama flight 101 took off for Miami shortly before noon, but it received instructions from the company's directors to divert the flight to Cuba before entering U.S. airspace.

The company had daily flights to Miami, except on Sundays, prior to this date.

PPP's Changmarin Blames U.S. for Incidents

PA022202 Panama City CRITICA in Spanish 2 Mar 88 p 5

["The Famous Letters to Tula" column by Carlos Changmarin, member of the People's Party of Panama Politburo]

[Text] Moscow, 1 March.

The entire world knows that the employers strike on Monday called by the pro-U.S. businessmen to support the Yankee intervention in Panama failed. EFE had reported statements by CONATO [National Council of Organized Workers] leader Jose Manuel Meneses, who said workers would not support the employers strike. Therefore, although some have attempted to isolate President Solis Palma at the international level—and have added a few more pace-makers to the sugar industrialist Delvalle so he continues playing his role as a puppet—this plot has also failed.

It now happens that quite a few distinguished people in Latin America, who have been closely watching the clumsy intervention of the most reactionary U.S. circles in Panama and who have not had the courage to report it as an action contrary to the self-determination and democracy of peoples, are now complaining because the constitutional order has been violated in Panama. According to them, the United States has not meddled in Panama's affairs; however, there are trials of Panamanians in Miami, as if Panama is part of Florida or part of Louisiana; there is the participation of gringo embassy members in street demonstrations in Panama, openly encouraging the subversion of employers and neofascist

groups; and there is the suspension of previously approved economic aid—they have forgotten all that.... In Washington, a so-called Rivas Glalon, representative of the no-less-despicable Salvadoran regime, wanted to tell some "democratic" melodies [melopeas] at the OAS, asking for a vote against the Panamanian "tyranny," instead of a vote against his own government, which has killed thousands of patriots. This tragicomical act already depicts the plot promoted by the U.S. geniuses.

Another man, reportedly a Panamanian—Lawrence Chewing [actual name is Chewning] (chingongo) [chewing gum] Fabrega, who had resigned as Panamanian alternate representative to the OAS—again wanted to join the debate although he has no credentials. Finally, millionaire Lewis Galindo occupied the seat of the Salvadoran satraps, to ask for a U.S. economic embargo. What a patriot!

However, the United States cannot trick the whole world. An EFE report dated in London on 27 February comments on the UK conservative daily "THE TIMES" editorial, which mentions that the United States wants to get rid of strongmen like Noriega—there are others like him on the continent—but the paper questions: "Why has the United States chosen him (Noriega) as the object of accusations?" Noriega provided the answer during the interview by the Madrid weekly EL INDEPENDIENTE when he said: Because "The United States wants to control and threaten all Latin America from Panama."

According to another EFE report, the Spanish Government has expressed its desire for Panamanian problems to be resolved "with respect for people's sovereignty and without foreign intervention." A very good statement.

The statement by the neofascist Panamanian Christian Democrats causes laughter, because they had proposed the installation of a provisional government through a coup d'etat. The Christian Democrats are now reporting the Assembly's coup d'etat, claiming it is against the Constitution although they—U.S. pawns—always said Delvalle was the result of the 1984 electoral fraud, and did not recognize him as the constitutional president. Delvalle is now charging Noriega with "removing" him. Has he forgotten that Noriega "imposed" him as president? Undoubtedly, the United States is deeply involved in this and has a gun in its hands ready to use in Panama before the elections. This is what the world and what Latin American presidents should realize.

Reagan Drug Fighting Statement Criticized

PA022233 Paris AFP in Spanish 2058 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] Panama City, 2 Mar (AFP)—Panamanian Attorney General Carlos Augusto Villalaz today characterized the U.S. attitude toward Panama as "unbelievable, inconsistent, and immoral." This has been the first official Panamanian reaction to U.S. President Ronald Reagan's statement on an alleged lack of Panamanian cooperation in the repression of drug trafficking.

Villalaz said that since his appointment as attorney general in January 1986, "I have personally and at my own risk directed programs to repress drug trafficking in Panama." He noted that his office "has received and continues receiving many cooperation requests from U.S. federal agencies" and that in 1987, "the number of arrests; seizures of money, drugs, and chemicals; and joint operations increased."

Villalaz said Panama has "evidence, reports, and records" of interviews in which U.S. authorities thank us for our support and ask us to continue. The attorney general characterized recent U.S. statements as of a "purely political nature. We have been their best allies" in the struggle against drug trafficking. He noted: "It seems as if the U.S. Government were trying to discourage its allies in the struggle against drugs by encouraging drug traffickers and destroying the U.S. youth."

The Panamanian attorney general said it is illogical for the United States "to tell voters that Panama, who they try to present as the only party to blame for an illness they have not been able to fight, is responsible for everything."

Villalaz said that in spite of the U.S. attitude, Panama will continue fighting drug trafficking and that "it will be the U.S. people who must pass judgment on the ambivalent position of their government leaders."

The statement by the Panamanian attorney general will be sent this afternoon through diplomatic channels to the U.S. attorney general, the presidents of the UN and OAS commissions on narcotic drugs, and the attorneys general and justice ministers of all Latin American countries.

Zuniga Describes Radio Seizure, Kidnapping

PA021616 San Jose Radio Impacto in Spanish 1458 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Interview with People's Action Party, PAPO, President Carlos Ivan Zuniga by reporter Homero Londono on 1 March; place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Zuniga] As is well known, Radio Mundial facilities were completely destroyed today by paramilitary forces. The transmitters located 15 km from Panama City were totally destroyed.

My son, my nephew Mauro Zuniga, and myself were beaten by the paramilitary forces. My wife was also arrested for a brief period of time, and many of the radio station personnel, including the commentators, were also beaten. Many were victims of repression, which, I would say, was excessively brutal.

This is the fourth time this station has been shut down by the government. It seems this time the station will be closed for a long time, indefinitely, because the station

was completely destroyed, which did not occur on previous occasions. We are very concerned about what happened at the radio station and by the beatings suffered by all who were with us—my sons, the people, fellow workers, and PAPO members.

We were kidnapped. After the paramilitary forces dragged us out of the radio station facilities, we were put inside a private vehicle. Then we were let off at various locations far away from the city.

[Londono] Have you estimated the losses to the radio station facilities and the transmitters?

[Zuniga] From 130,000 to 150,000 balboas, in addition to the loss of business this attack represents for this radio station. However, we are not concerned about the commercial aspect of the problem. We are concerned because Panamanian people have been deprived of the only means of communication the Panamanian opposition has. Panama has now been left with no opposition communication media.

[Londono] This means you were released somewhere? You were not taken to a police station?

[Zuniga] Right. We were taken...[corrects himself] I was taken to a lower-class neighborhood known as Hollywood, where I have many friends who immediately protected me since they had been listening to Radio Mundial and were aware of the attack. My son was released in the Canal Zone area, where he was also picked up by friends. This is one of those diabolical operations to show the world that there is no freedom of expression here.

General Ruben Paredes Claims FDP 'Purge'

PA030140 Buenos Aires REUTER in Spanish 2307 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] Panama City, 2 Mar (REUTER)—General Manuel Antonio Noriega's predecessor as commander of the Panama Defense Forces [FDP] said today that reportedly a purge has begun among the military with the removal of a dissident officer.

However, the FDP Public Relations Office has denied reports of a restructuring, noting that no officer has resigned and none have been removed.

General Ruben Dario Paredes, FDP commander until 1983 and a strong critic of Noriega, said today that Major Moises del Rio has been forced to retire and it is believed other officers will be facing the same fate. In a telephone interview, Paredes told REUTER: "This is a sign of decomposition among the military. I suspect a purge has begun."

Leaders of the opposition Christian Democratic Party said earlier that two majors have been expelled from the FDP and there are rumors that higher-ranking officers will face the same fate.

People opposed to Noriega have been predicting for a long time that an internal opposition will emerge against the general—who is accused of involvement in drug trafficking and other crimes—among the 16,000 men who compose the FDP. Noriega, however, secured immediate support from the highest-ranking officers when President Eric Arturo Delvalle tried to remove him last week. The officers supported the removal of Delvalle and his replacement in the Presidency by Education Minister Manuel Solis Palma.

Paredes, along with Colonel Roberto Diaz Herrera, who unleashed the protest movement against Noriega in June last year and who is now in exile in Venezuela, is one of the few officers who openly criticizes the Panamanian military leader.

Police Department Chief Colonel Leonidas Macias, one of the first officers to publicly support Noriega last week, told newsmen today that no officer has retired or has been removed in recent days. There were no clashes between demonstrators and police today, the 2d day of the anti-Noriega strike, when the opposition erected barricades and started bonfires on some streets, Col Macias said.

The police chief said the police have closed the opposition's Radio Mundial for having broadcast seditious propaganda. The owners of the radio station said that in occupying the radio station, the police caused property damage amounting to $150,000.

The banks, which yesterday closed voluntarily, fearing mass withdrawal, today were urged by the government to reopen their doors, and the Banking Commission assured them they should not fear having liquidity problems.

Daily Analyzes FDP Problems

PA022022 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 6 Feb 88 p 15a

[Article by Ramon E. Howe W.: "General Noriega Is Not the Problem"]

[Text] This article seeks to call the Panamanian people's attention to national problems whose effects are being reflected in our socioeconomic condition. We need to carry out debates to reach solutions. These solutions should correct the source of the problem. This way, we will be opening the path to peace for all Panamanians.

Removing General Noriega from the Defense Forces is among the proposals made by those who oppose the current government. Should this goal be attained, there will then be similar proposals to remove other generals who, in turn, will succeed Noriega.

What is the real problem?

The real problem is power, not human power, but instead the problem originated by a system that has been improved. The FDP system of power is today better organized and disciplined than the system under which General Torrijos ruled.

One of the improvements in the FDP system is Law 20. Its unquestionable influence in the civilian government, [includes], among other things: the Immigration and Customs Office passports section, the Civil Aeronautics Board, the airports (entry and departure of people and planes), ports, railroads, the Bayano cement factory, the National Directorate of Land Traffic and Transportation, INRENARE [Institute of Natural Renewable Resources], the National Security Agency (INTEL) [National Institute of Telecommunications], IRHE [Institute of Hydraulic Resources and Electrification], IDAAN [National Water and Sanitation Institute], DACA or DINA [Metropolitan Sanitation Department], SINAPROC [National Civil Defense System], the Foreign Service, and the Renovacion Publishing Company, Inc.

Once Noriega leaves, the one succeeding him will rule with the same system.

Why has the military been blamed for all the misfortunes afflicting Panama?

Simply because they have stuck their hands in all matters which are civilian responsibilities. It is possible that a government official on his own initiative violates the laws, and he should be held responsible before the tribunals. However, civilians blame the general.

Is the military necessary in the Republic of Panama?

Yes indeed, we need a professional military force to protect the lives of citizens and the security of the national territory.

Then, what should the FDP be like?

As the title of this article says: "General Noriega Is Not the Problem."

The problem is the FDP organizational system—that is, the Army, the police, traffic inspectors, and the DENI [National Department of Investigation] and all its tentacles, which also reach other state institutions.

To open up one of the paths to peace for all Panamanians, we recommend modifications to the FDP system of power through the following legal mechanisms:

a. The police, the DENI, and all its jails should be part of the Judicial Branch, because all arrests are handled by the justice tribunals.

b. The National Directorate of Land Traffic and Transportation and the forest guards should be part of the municipal institutions.

c. The remaining sections of the military forces should be organized as a professional army with specific functions, such as safeguarding the national territory, protecting and providing controlled civil aid, and participating in the defense of the canal area.

d. The creation of a Defense Ministry that will represent the Army before the Executive Branch.

With the aforementioned changes, it will not be difficult to give a ticket to an Army general because he committed a traffic violation, or to arrest him because he disobeyed the laws or abused the authority bestowed upon him. Furthermore, this will even make it possible to remove him.

Groups Express Support for Noriega, Solis Palma

PA021400 [Editorial Report] Panama City CRITICA in Spanish on 1 March carries five communiques from various groups expressing support for General Manuel Antonio Noriega, President Manuel Solis Palma, and the Panama Defense Forces (FDP) and condemning U.S. and local opposition actions.

There are two communiques on page 7. The first is an undated 600-word communique issued by the Popular Broad Front Party, FRAMPO, and signed by its president, Miguel Montiel. It states that throughout its history, Panama has been ruled by oligarchic governments and armed forces subordinated to the wishes and following the orders of the U.S. Embassy. General Torrijos broke this tradition, and Gen Noriega took on this cause after Torrijos' death, FRAMPO says. The communique states that "this is why they are trying to eliminate Gen Noriega" and adds: "Gen Noriega and his mid-level leadership, noncommissioned officers, and troops have not fallen to their knees or sold themselves out; on the contrary, they have fought back with courage, dignity, and patriotism." In conclusion, the communique reiterates FRAMPO's support for Gen Noriega, the FDP, and President Manuel Solis Palma.

Also on page 7 is a 500-word communique issued by the Finance Ministry's branch of the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) on 26 February. The communique, addressed to all Torrijists, says Delvalle's attempt to oust Gen Noriega "is a landmark in the Reagan administration's aggressive campaign." It states that attacks against the FDP and its

commander are the "grotesque reply of imperialist arrogance in the face of the patriotic, nationalist refusal to accept the negotiation of a pact guaranteeing a U.S. military presence beyond the year 2000, which would run counter to the Torrijos-Carter Treaties."

During the past 8 months of political crisis, the Panamanian people have clearly understood the interests of the groups comprising the "fascist" Civic Crusade, the PRD branch says. The communique ends by praising Manuel Solis Palma for his efforts to bring back Torrijism, which allows the participation of popular sectors.

Two other communiques appear on page 11. A 300-word communique issued by the National Confederation of Peasant Settlements, CONAC, on 28 February and signed by its president, Julio Bermudez, states that the threats of "U.S. imperialism" to invade Panama with troops headquartered in the former Canal Zone and the oligarchy's actions confirm CONAC's charge that the United States will violate the canal treaties and try to stay in Panama beyond the year 2000. It adds: "Our organization and people condemn the treachery of Eric Arturo Delvalle and other sectors, who shamefully crawl as lackeys before their Yankee bosses." After stating that CONAC rejects such threats, the communique ends by saying the group will face those threats and calls on patriotic, nationalistic businessmen to support CONAC's cause.

A second, undated 450-word communique on page 11 was issued by the PRD's Front of Public Servants and signed by its national secretary, Benjamin Colamarco. It states that the patriotic stand of the FDP's mid-level leadership shows the strength of this institution and its decision to further the legacy of General Torrijos. The communique notes that the PRD front, on 31 January, called for the establishment of a popular patriotic front against domestic and foreign aggression. Among its goals would be "the expulsion of the Southern Command and specific actions to neutralize Law 96-70 by formally denouncing it and preparing Panamanian alternatives in case the treaty is not fulfilled." The communique ends by stating that the Reagan administration's "political aggression" must be defeated by the people united around a national liberation plan.

A 650-word communique on page 12 issued by the Education Ministry's administrative personnel on 26 February states that in view of recent events, the group "vigorously rejects the maneuvers and meddlesome attitude of a sector of the U.S. Government, which undermine our country's dignity, sovereignty, and peace." The communique expresses support for Gen Noriega and President Solis.

General Paredes Views Ramifications of Situation

PA021452 Bogota Radio Cadena Nacional in Spanish 0328 GMT 1 Mar 88

[Telephone interview with General Ruben Dario Paredes, retired, from Panama City by Jose Caballero; date not given—live or recorded; monitored in progress]

[Text] [Paredes]...shrimp, textiles, and so on will not be imported by the United States. Our only airline, Air Panama, will not be allowed to land in the United States. If an airline is not allowed to fly to other countries, it means less business for the airline. Consequently, we will have serious economic problems here. In addition, we are being isolated more and more. You have seen Japan's attitude, which is shared by other Asian countries: Solve your problems in a democratic way if you want us to invest more in your country. You have also seen that Alan Garcia recalled his ambassador a few hours ago so he can present a report to the Peruvian Government. You know quite well that this is a way of exerting pressure. Mexico also stands firm and supports the Panamanian people's struggle to achieve democracy.

It is true Noriega can probably maneuver a couple of months more, but you can imagine how much this will cost our people, these 2 million inhabitants. I do not think—that is why I respectfully disagree with what you have just said—Noriega has consolidated his position. He still controls everything, yes, but the country is being annihilated by all the things I mentioned before.

[Caballero] Gen Paredes, you are in Panama. Are you afraid to repeat the charges you have just mentioned?

[Paredes] No, no. This is not the time to feel afraid. You know what can happen, but the Republic must be saved. We must tell the truth—because this is the truth, not slander—so those who have the solution in their hands will wake up and realize what is happening. We must tell the truth; we cannot act like the ostrich, which buries its head in the sand whenever there is danger. We must break the barrier of fear so those who control the government can maneuver and seek a political solution. That is the only alternative in this crisis.

We need a political solution, but those who surround Noriega, particularly the civilians, are blind. They think they will lose their lives if they risk political control in honest, democratic, and pure elections. Many reject the idea because they think the loss of political and economic benefits is a mortal threat. Those are the people who do not let Noriega see beyond the end of his nose and who sing their sirens' song telling Noriega: You are the greatest! You are indestructible! You will remain in power forever! You are Torrijos incarnate! You are the greatest nationalist! You are the new Simon Bolivar!

This attitude precludes a civilian solution. I have publicly said—I wish one of us could tell this to Noriega—that he has the solution in his hands. He must rid the country of this unpleasant [words indistinct], meaning Noriega, himself. He has the solution in his hands, and, even if some people do not let him act, he is responsible for his actions.

[Caballero] Gen Paredes, we have one last question. We would like to hear your views about the peace efforts by former Latin American presidents. According to a communique issued in Colombia, former Presidents Alfonso Lopez Michelsen and Carlos Andres contacted Gen Noriega, hoping they would reach an understanding.

[Paredes] I do not know much about this. I have only heard about their arrival here and their concern, but I did not have the chance to talk with them. I was able to talk with former Venezuelan President Herrera Campins when he visited Panama, however. We held a private meeting, and he is also worried about the situation. We can assert that Carlos Andres Perez, Alfonso Lopez Michelsen, Felipe Gonzalez, and even former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Lopez Portillo... [changes thought] All those men helped Torrijos in the struggle to achieve the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. It was a masterstroke in international politics, and Torrijos set a precedent in international law. Anyway, those gentlemen—who are still alive and sometimes visit Panama—are concerned because the current government's attitude and irresponsibility is endangering those treaties and achievements.

One of the U.S. presidential candidates—I think it was Kemp—went as far as saying: Well, if Panamanians want to have Noriega as head of government, head of the Defense Forces, and head of the entire country, that is their business. Let them understand one thing, however. We will not hand over the canal as the treaties state, because we cannot hand the canal over to a reckless, corrupt drug trafficker. There is corruption there. There is no democracy. This is what Kemp said.

Another candidate, Bush, has even been speaking about the possibility of an armed intervention. These are very dangerous things that are caused by our intransigence. [Words indistinct] all of us are responsible for what is happening. All of us are responsible for what may happen here in Panama. That is why it is not good to remain silent over Panama's domestic situation. There are no mass media the opposition or the independent sectors can use to speak freely. I am independent. I do not belong to any party. I am like thousands and thousands of thinking Panamanians who do not want anything to do with political parties of one side or the other. We do want to know about our fatherland, however. That is the situation. The Torrijos-Carter Treaties have been placed in jeopardy because of the intransigence of Noriega and those supporting him.

Argentina

Measures To Prevent Falklands 'Incidents'

PY021724 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1600 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Excerpt] Buenos Aires, 2 Mar (EFE)—The Argentine Government is studying the implementation of measures aimed at avoiding any incidents in the South Atlantic, 5 days before the deployment of at least 5,000 British troops to the Malvinas Islands.

According to what Argentine Government sources told EFE today, these measures reportedly will encompass patrol operations within the 200-mile limit and placing on alert all Argentine naval bases in the southern region.

It was stated that these measures are similar to the ones adopted on 1 February 1987, on the occasion of the enforcement of the "exclusive economic zone" that was implemented by Great Britain around the Malvinas Islands, whose sovereignty has been claimed by Argentina since 1833.

Although Argentine authorities have stressed that "the main strategy" in the conflict with Great Britain "is the use of diplomatic channels," government spokesmen have noted the need to avoid incidents during the "Fire Focus" [preceding two words in English] maneuvers, which will start on 7 March.

The Peronist Justicialist Party, the main Argentine opposition force, has demanded that the government implement a "preventive military operations plan" in answer to the British maneuvers.

In a statement issued today before dawn, the Justicialist Party also warned the U.S. Government "not to allow Great Britain to use Ascension Island for refueling its planes."

Ascension Island, located in the South Atlantic equatorial region, is the site of a U.S. military base used by Great Britain in the war waged with Argentina between April and June 1982 over possession of the Malvinas Islands.

Hernan Patino Meyer, Justicialist Party defense commission secretary, today told EFE that his party is making these demands "not only to prevent any eventual British actions, but also any mistakes that could be made by the Argentine ships that normally patrol the area."

Patino Meyer, the Peronist party's main expert in military affairs, said he "trusts" there will be no incidents during the military maneuvers, which according to information available in Buenos Aires encompass the deployment of 5,000 troops to join the 2,000 troops already stationed on the islands.

EFE has learned from diplomatic sources in Buenos Aires that there is "a tacit non-agression pact" between Argentina and Great Britain as a result of the "good offices" negotiations that third countries, among them the United States, have carried out to achieve a rapprochement between the parties involved in the conflict. [passage omitted]

'Military Alert' Planned

PY031351 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 1330 GMT 3 Mar 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 3 Mar (NA)—According to a reliable government source, the government will supposedly order "a general military alert" and a land and naval "strict surveillance" area in southern Argentina in response to the maneuvers that the United Kingdom will start in the Malvinas Islands on Monday, 7 March.

The source also told NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS that during the past few days President Raul Alfonsin has held meetings with Defense Minister Horacio Jaunarena and the chief of the Joint Staff, Brigadier Teodoro Waldner, among other high-ranking military officers.

According to the source, the purpose of the meetings was to complement at the military level—but in a restricted manner—the diplomatic offensive the Argentine Government is carrying out in view of the British decision to hold military maneuvers on the Malvinas Islands.

According to today's issue of the daily PAGINA 12, the "national government will supposedly order military maneuvers in response to the British military exercises in the Malvinas."

However, the spokesman said the term "military maneuvers" is "too exaggerated" because it implies the deployment of all forces—land, navy, and air forces—which would mean a great expenditure that the treasury is in no condition to make.

Moreover, other sources pointed out that it has been a long time since the Argentine Armed Forces carried out joint maneuvers of that type, and last year they only carried out restricted joint military exercises in the areas of Puerto Belgrano, in the south of Buenos Aires Province, in Bajo Piranay [name as received], in Curuzu Cuatia, in Corrientes, and in Mercedes, which is 100 km from Buenos Aires. [passage indistinct]

Caputo To Call Security Council Meeting

PY021834 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 1801 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Excerpts] Buenos Aires, 2 Mar (NA)—Foreign Minister Dante Caputo today unexpectedly traveled from Hamburg to New York, apparently to ask for an immediate UN Security Council meeting, seeking a council resolution asking for the suspension of the British military maneuvers on the Malvinas Islands that are due to begin Monday, it was revealed by reliable sources here. [passage omitted]

It was revealed that Caputo will call for a UN Security Council meeting that will be held "between tomorrow and next Monday" in an attempt to prevent the maneuvers, despite the fact that [words indistinct] Great Britain has the right to veto the Security Council's resolutions, a power it will obviously use in this case. The United States, France, USSR, and PRC also have veto power.

"The objective of the Argentine Foreign Ministry is to make the Margaret Thatcher government pay at least a diplomatic price," the sources added.

The Argentine Government feels its call for a Security Council meeting will have the support of a declaration the OAS Permanent Council issued yesterday expressing concern about the maneuvers. The United States, however, abstained. Argentina is a temporary member of the UN Security Council.

Before traveling to Hamburg, Caputo met in New York with UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar to brief him on the Argentine position. Perez de Cuellar is undertaking a good offices mission between the two countries. [passage omitted]

More on Caputo UN Appeal

PY031519 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 1426 GMT 3 Mar 88

[Excerpts] Buenos Aires, 3 Mar (NA)—Foreign Minister Dante Caputo arrived in New York this morning, possibly to call a meeting of the UN Security Council so it can request the suspension of the British military maneuvers on the Malvinas Islands scheduled to begin next Monday. This decision, according to newspaper reports, may have been made last night during a phone conversation between Caputo and President Raul Alfonsin. As of noon today, official spokesmen for government house, the Foreign Ministry, and Congress have neither confirmed nor denied those reports, although they did confirm that Caputo is conducting last-minute consultations with U.S. officials, as well as with officials from other countries, to see if a consensus can be obtained supporting the Argentine position on this new episode in the South Atlantic conflict.

The sources explained that the Argentine Government decided "to put as much pressure as possible" on Great Britain to make it change its decision to carry out military maneuvers on the Malvinas Islands between 7 and 31 March, "or at least to make Great Britain pay the diplomatic price of such an attitude." [passage omitted]

Sources contacted by NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS revealed that the United States will provide logistical support to the task force that will be deployed from Ascension Island, in compliance with specific agreements with Great Britain. The United States will do so despite a request to the contrary by the Chamber of Deputies of our country. [passage omitted]

It has transpired that Caputo will request a meeting of the UN Security Council, which will be held "between today and next Monday," to try to have the maneuvers suspended. Great Britain has veto power on that body's resolutions, and it will certainly use it in this case. Veto power can also be exercised by the United States, France, the Soviet Union, and the PRC.

Bolivia

Minister Says 1st Day of COB Strike Failure

PY020238 La Paz La Red Panamericana in Spanish 0000 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Summary] Information Minister German Antelo said the 1st day of the Bolivian Labor Confederation stoppage was an absolute failure because activities in the country were normal with only a few exceptions. He said the stoppage demonstrated the failure of the politicians at the COB, and the failure is a result of the workers' awareness of their duties and the fact that stoppages like this harm the country.

Minister Antelo reported on activity in the following cities:

La Paz: 85 to 90 percent of normal activity. Some factory workers and health sector employees complied with the stoppage. Approximately 50 percent of the teachers worked normally. Railroad and university activities were suspended.

Cochabamba: 90 percent of the activities normal. Only some teachers complied with the stoppage.

Santa Cruz: 90 to 95 percent of the activities were normal. Stores, banks, and most factories operated normally. Teachers partially complied with the stoppage.

Oruro: 85 to 90 percent normal activity. Only some municipal employees, (Cordeoro), some health sector employees, YPFB employees, ENFE [National Railway Enterprise] employees, and some mining districts suspended activities.

Tarija: 90 percent normal activity. Only some teachers and YPFB gasoline stations complied with the stoppage.

Potosi: 70 percent normal activity. Social Security Pension, YPFB, municipality, ENFE, and sanitary sector employees suspended their activities. All other sectors functioned normally.

Beni: 80 percent normal. Only the university and (?the Haasana) suspended activities.

Minister Antelo also reported that pickets in La Paz attempted to prevent activity at certain factories not complying with the stoppage. Police interference, however, prevented further difficulties.

Activities 90% Normal

Normal

PY022100 La Paz La Red Panamericana in Spanish 1700 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] Repeating his opinion of yesterday, Information Minister Herman Antelo has said that the current COB-sponsored stoppage again demonstrates the obvious failure of the COB's power to call and receive support for a stoppage.

Here are Minister Herman Antelo's comments:

[Begin recording] Yesterday's activities were 80-percent normal, the percentage increased today; we believe that over 90 percent of the country's activities today were normal.

There are small groups who continue to strike. However, most of the people, including industry, shops, banks, government offices, and a number of other private and public activities are functioning normally. Transport activities are almost absolutely normal.

We hope this will set a precedent so that the trade union leadership, noting the failure of this strike, will no longer take this type of action. [end recording]

Chile

State of Emergency Extended for 90 Days

PY021822 Santiago Domestic Service in Spanish 1600 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] The official gazette today published decree No 500, issued by the Interior Ministry, extending for 90 days the state of emergency in the country. The terms of the decree are based on Article 40 of the Constitution, which provides for the declaration of a state of a state of emergency in case national security is in jeopardy. The decree designates the chiefs of the emergency zones and their alternates for the nation's regions and provinces.

Another decree, also published by the gazette today, states that the mass media shall refrain from disseminating in any manner or form any report related to the activities of the people, organizations, movements, or groups listed in Article 8 of the Constitution. This restriction shall not apply to official reports released by the governemnt. The General Secretariat of Government and the chiefs of the emergency zones shall see that the terms of this decree are complied with.

Dignidad Colony Blames Leftists for FRG Stance

PY021418 Santiago Domestic Service in Spanish 0930 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] The Dignidad Charity Society, headquartered in Parral, believes a group of Marxists is campaigning in the FRG to besmirch the society and force it to cease its work in Chile.

The so-called Dignidad Colony issued a public declaration signed by its president, Hermann Schmidt, and the society's secretary, (Hans-Juergen Blank), saying that pro-Marxist groups in the FRG dislike the society's cooperation with Chile and Chileans.

The declaration states that these groups are influencing the FRG Government to dismiss the society's achievements and make false and absurd accusations. They are trying to destroy the work we have quietly and decently developed for over 26 years on behalf of what we today consider to be our fatherland, the document states.

The declaration says the society is being attacked because it did not allow an eight-member foreign intervention commission to enter the colony, a Chilean society ruled by Chilean laws. The declaration further states that charges that the colony had set anti-aircraft traps to prevent a Carabineros helicopter from landing in the colony are absurd lies, and it denies an FRG diplomat's assertion that the charge has been proven. Carabineros also denied these charges through a communique in a newspaper.

The FRG ambassador confirmed having received the Dignidad society's declaration.

Briefs

Foreign Debt Figures

According to the Central Bank, the Chilean foreign debt amounted to $19.099 billion on 31 December 1987 compared to $19.388 billion on 31 December 1986. This reduction is due to a drop in mid- and long-term commitments, which currently amount to $17.667 billion. Of this amount, $12.667 billion is owed to private banks and financial organizations. [Summary] *[Santiago EL MERCURIO in Spanish 24 Feb 88 p B 1 PY]*

Colombia

Minister on 'Disagreeable Situation' in Panama

PA022052 Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 1730 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Statement by Communications Minister Fernando Cepada Ulloa, also "minister in charge of foreign affairs," on 2 March; place not given—recorded]

[Text] The Colombian Government is confident that this very disagreeable situation will be overcome and that relations between Colombia and Panama will return to the usual levels of cordiality and excellent relations as neighbors.

Ecuador

Government Modifies Currency Exchange System

PA030153 Paris AFP in Spanish 0039 GMT 3 Mar 88

[Text] Quito, 2 Mar (AFP)—The Ecuadoran Government modified the country's currency exchange system and established the free market quotation at 275 sucres, 125 less than last Friday's quotation, Monetary Board President Rodrigo Espinosa announced here today.

In August 1986, the government suspended the currency exchange system, and its quotation was based on offer and demand; however, in the past few weeks speculative maneuvers led the Ecuadoran currency to an unprecedented devaluation, which forced the adoption of this measure.

Paraguay

U.S. Envoy 'Idiot,' 'Filthy,' 'Tasteless'

PY021542 Asuncion Domestic Service in Spanish 2330 GMT 1 Mar 88

[Voz del Coloradismo commentary]

[Text] On this day when the entire Paraguayan people led by the president of the Republic honored the memory and the example of the hero of Cerro Cora, Mariscal Francisco Solano Lopez, we want to give thought to the ideal that moved him to sacrifice his own life as no one else has ever done in the history of the world: the ideal of a free, independent, and sovereign Paraguay. For this free, independent, and sovereign Paraguay, our forefathers fought in Paraguari and Cerro Porteno; for this free, independent, and sovereign Paraguay, the founders of the fatherland brought about the May Revolution, which originated in the libertarian cry of the Comuneros [movement that rebelled against Spain]; for this ideal of freedom, independence, and sovereignty, Francia and Don Carlos Antonio Lopez struggled; and for this ideal, our greatest hero, the Mariscal de Acero finally gave his life as a martyr.

For that ideal, Bernardino Caballero lived and worked tirelessly. And today, that golden legacy has been inherited by our leader, President Alfredo Stroessner.

Consequently, nothing and no one will wrest from our hands those historic banners of our heroic people. Certainly, it will not be done by an uncouth, petulant, meddlesome diplomat who pretends to ignore the personality of our people and respect for our fatherland. We are talking about, quote, His Excellency, unquote, Clyde Taylor, the perfect epitome of a perfect anti-diplomat.

On this day when we evoke the memory of our—and one of the world's—greatest heroes, we want to tell this international professor of putting one's foot in one's mouth at the diplomatic level to stop projecting his frustated policeman's complex amid Paraguayans. What we need the least here are good-for-nothings who believe that with money they can gain the right to meddle in other people's problems. Mind you that we do not have problems, but if we do, we will resolve them, as we have resolved the problems unfortunately left behind by misgovernments in the past. We have overcome other difficulties as well, such as those created by past ambassadors who were subversive agitators rather than diplomats.

At the risk of putting off Cuarto Oscuro [political gossip column in ULTIMA HORA newspaper], we consider Mr Taylor to be a subversive, no matter how much of a North American he is. Furthermore, his office on Mariscal Lopez Avenue is nothing but an spy's lookout post. Ever since this drug-addiction expert landed in Paraguay, he has been lying, insulting, and sticking his nose in someone else's business. He gave distorted information, and continues to do so, about our electoral system and our democracy, as he did in the case of Radio Nanduti. Cynically, he lied about the suspension of the [EL PUEBLO] newspaper that was suspended for its pro-communist leaning. Now, after lying about the 14 February elections, he comes up saying that he did not say what he said.

In Guarani we can tell Mr Taylor: Let the dog eat your.... We do not need to complete the phrase because the people know what we mean. Translated into Latin, the phrase reads canus morti, testiculus sum [as heard]. If the drug-addiction expert does not know Guarani or Latin, we think he will have enough dollars to pay for a translation. But this is another problem.

What we want to tell this busy-body now is to hold back his policeman's and imperialist boss' impetus. Here the Paraguayan people do not need, nor do they accept, bosses from the left or the right. The only boss and master of the people is the leader who emerges from the ballot box. Everything else, speaking in Guarani, is dog sweat.

Just as we have shooed away [former U.S. Ambassador] Mr White and others like him, we will run away the Taylors of any shape and size. But perhaps we can just tell this ambassador to think over what he has said and done. Then he could say whether we are a majority or not, whether we have or do not have reason. And please, Ambassador, take a fair middle position.

Simpletons who have no understanding of diplomacy and think our people are so submissive as to tolerate unwarranted interference are mistaken! They ought to be careful, because when his tail is stepped on, the lion does not just growl. A proverb says: Look at the speck in your eye first, then look the beam in someone else's eye [as heard]. This proverb should be put into practice by this diplomatic bungler who has for a long time been playing with our fellow party members' patience and that of the Paraguayan people.

The Colorado people are growing tired of this repulsive representative of a defunct colonialism, which at least in the Paraguay of Lopez, Francia, Caballero, and Stroessner at

this time will not sprout again. The sad times of slavery, subservience, and servility are past, and the time has come to tell Mr Taylor to keep quiet, take it easy, or, in any case, to leave before he is thrown out as was Mr White. The time has come to warn this meddler to stick to his diplomatic duties or to brace himself for what is coming to him. We will not let him go any further, and if necessary the 300 Colorado Party chapters will come to the embassy to tell him what he apparently has wanted to hear for long time: Go home, Taylor, go home [preceding phrase in English]. Go home, go home [preceding phrase in Guarani]. Go home, Taylor, go home.

Mr Taylor will not find what he is looking for here because there is no poverty, hunger, widespread disease, social problems, military uprisings, or student-worker rebellions. There are no fiancees, mothers, wives, or daughters worrying about their loved ones returning home. Tears are not being shed because of terrorist acts here. Fields do not look foresaken here for lack of cultivation and care. No industrial smokestacks are standing idle here. Prisons are not overcrowded with prisoners of conscience here. You, Ambassador Taylor, can rummage through the embassy's files to see what life was like in this country and what has been done to secure peace and tranquillity for the long-suffering Paraguayan people.

Let Mr Taylor know that in the Paraguay ruled by President Stroessner and the Colorado Party there are no bloodstains on the streets in the wake of guerrilla actions. No matter how Mr Taylor would like to see it, jackals are not feeding on foresaken corpses here. The people want to live in happiness. The people are not victims of exploitation or domination here. Terror, which you and your frocked and bearded accomplices talked about, is not silencing this nation. So we think the time has come for you to be quiet, to take it easy, to judiciously look at things, or, if you can't do that, go home.

That is what we wanted to express on this sacred date of 1 March, a glorious landmark in the epic of Mariscal Lopez' sacrifice. He died to light the torch of a free, independent, and sovereign fatherland for which he, Mariscal Lopez, laid down his life.

As for the drug-addiction expert Clyde Taylor, the idiot Taylor, the filthy Taylor, the tasteless and bungling diplomat Taylor, we can finally tell him to shut up [preceding two words in English], shut up [preceding two words in Guarani], or go home [preceding two words in English], go home you crazy fool [preceding phrase in Guarani].

Uruguay

Public Debt Refinancing Agreement Reached

PY021828 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0259 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] Montevideo, 1 Mar (EFE)—Central Bank sources today said the Uruguayan Government and 100 private creditor banks have reached an agreement to refinance the country's public debt over a 20-year period, with a 6-year grace period and a service cost of 0.8 percent over the London LIBOR [London Interbank Offered Rate] index.

The agreement with the creditor committee will be signed by Economy Minister Ricardo Zervino and Central Bank President Ricardo Pascale in New York on 4 March.

This is the second refinancing that Julio Maria Sanguinetti's government has carried out since 1 March 1985, the date of the government's return to democracy after 12 years of military rule.

The first refinancing was signed in 1985. Uruguay started new negotiations after last year's successful negotiations by Mexico and Venezuela to obtain better conditions for the payment of their debts. These negotiations ended with the present agreement.

The refinancing with creditor banks encompasses $1.779 billion out of a total public debt of $3.8 billion, which includes credits from the World Bank and the IDB.

The new terms extend the period of payments until 2004 and increase the grace period from 3 to 6 years.

Interest rates were lowered from 1.4 percent over the London LIBOR index in 1985 to the present 0.8 percent.

The total Uruguayan foreign debt, counting public and private debts, is $5.4 billion, one of the highest per capita debts in Latin America.

Sanguinetti on Economy, Debt, Policies

PY021616 Montevideo Radio El Espectador Network in Spanish 1600 GMT 1 Mar 88

[Text] During a new conference President Julio Maria Sanguinetti gave this morning, he discarded the possibility of reducing in the short term the amount of taxes collected from agricultural, cattle raising, and other productive sectors.

At the beginning of the news conference President Sanguinetti said several sectors are still experiencing difficulties created by goals that have not been achieved.

In the field of democrtic stability, President Sanguinetti pointed out that the Uruguayan transition to democracy is respected and priased abroad. He also said the fundamental objective for the next 2 years of government is to unreservedly support the export industries, in which the government has placed its hopes for economic development during its remaining 2 years in office.

During these remaining 2 years, the government will attempt to consolidate all the achievements of its first 3 years in office. Sanguinetti said that during 1988 the country will try to surpass all export records, and that stable conditions and a realistic exchange policy will help achieve this goal.

Regarding Congress' talks with other national political sectors, President Sanguinetti regretted that the opposition failed to support in Congress the bills aimed at modernizing the country, particularly the bills for the reorganization of ILPE [State Seal and Fishing Industry] and the partial privatization of PLUNA [Uruguayan National Airlines], which were submitted to Congress. President Sanguinetti said: We hope these laws are approved and help modernize Uruguay.

Regarding the pressure on the productive sectors from heavy taxes, Sanguinetti said these taxes will become lighter as the fiscal deficit decreases. He said the fiscal deficit is already decreasing, although slowly.

Regarding requests by the agricultural and cattle sectors for the reduction of taxes, which were made public a few days ago, Sanguinetti said those sectors welcomed the new measures related to the marketing of meat and wool, among other products.

Still commenting on the agricultural and cattle sectors, Sanguinetti pointed out that people will settle in the interior if living conditions in the region are improved. Sanguinetti emphasized the importance of installing electricity in the rural areas, improving the roads, and eradicating unhealthy living conditions in rural areas, a job that is being carried out by MEDIR [not further identified].

Sanguinetti considered very serious the situation created by the great number of empty houses in Montevideo and in some parts of the interior. Sanguinetti said this situation was taken into consideration by the rental law, and that there will not be a new rental law. Sanguinetti pointed out that the government will try in every way possible to prevent the creation of new mechanisms that may affect the market of rental houses.

In an announcement that had a great impact on the people, Sanguinetti said the National Comptrollers Office will extend its guarantees to the rents of certain private sectors.

Sanguinetti also talked about the foreign debt. He said the foreign debt has increased a little, but we have been able to administer it by refinancing and renegotiating it to extend payments and pay lower interest rates. Sanguinetti added this was possible because of the reactivation of production.

Regarding opposition criticism on the state of the health sector, Sanguinetti pointed out that the government is refurbishing several health institutions such as the Pasteur Hospital and the Pereira Rossell Hospital, and it is faced with the construction of a burn center, which requires large government investments. Sanguinetti admitted, however, that there was a deficit in mental health care, a situation he said was endemic.

Regarding the banking situation, Sanguinetti said the purchase of private banks by the Bank of the Republic was not something the government wanted to do. The measure was successful in some instances, such as in the Workers Coffer [La Caja Obrera] Bank, but failed in other cases, such as the Commercial Bank and the Pan de Azucar Bank, the president added, and he confirmed the latter will probably be sold to an international banking institution.

Sanguinetti said the government purchased these banks to defend the country's stability, to protect workers' jobs, and to maintain the country's financial stability.

The president refused to comment on recent internal conflicts in the Mortgage Bank. He said facts will soon prove who is right.

Regarding the housing policy to be implemented through the bank, the president said the 5-year plan will be revised and adapted to the present situation. Sanguinetti pointed out that the number of mortgages has increased, adding that from now on the bank will emphasize new houses.

These are some of the issues the president talked about before foreign and national journalists during the news conference this morning.

Suriname

Cost of Living More Than Doubles Since 1984

FL021748 Paramaribo International Service in English 1730 GMT 2 Mar 88

[Text] According to the Statistics Bureau, last year's cost of living has increased with more than 100 percent in relation with the figures of 1984. Officially, this is more than a doubling. If we include the black market, this is an increase of more than 200 percent.

(Debilitare), of the trade union federation, C-47, has stated that the rise of wages over the same period stands in violent contrast with the rise of the cost of living. According to (Debilitare), this problem which causes social tension can be solved in the factories because it's a political problem which, therefore, needs a political solution.

The trade union federation says that the workers will act on their own if there is political indecision while the yoke gets heavier for the working class.